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SIGNOR PRATESI

*From Photo by P. BERTIERI*

## *Rehearsing a Ballet*

WRITTEN BY A. HENRIQUES VALENTINE. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS



**T**O attempt to make an approximate computation of the number of theatre-goers who have witnessed the performance of a ballet in London, would be beyond the powers of the ordinary statistician. He might confidently say that nearly every one who calls himself

or herself a playgoer, has once at least in his or her career seen one of the gorgeous spectacles at the Alhambra or the Empire. A problem much easier of solution would be, how many of the aforesaid theatre-goers have ever seen a ballet in rehearsal? I should say very few indeed. The mysteries of such a production are quite beyond the ken of the general public. Managers of



theatres and music-halls are not as a rule too anxious to allow outsiders within the charmed circle during the rehearsal. And quite right too. The presence of strangers is particularly embarrassing to the artistes, the author, and the stage manager, and it is only when the piece is near completion that

"A capital idea," he said, with his cheeriest smile. "The description of the ballet rehearsal" (I think he meant it spelt like this, though I have my doubts) "would make an interesting magazine article, as the public know so little of theatrical rehearsals, and the subject has not often been attempted."



JOSEPHINE CASABONI

a privileged few are invited to the dress rehearsal.

When I first mentioned to Mr. C. Dundas Slater, the manager of the Alhambra, my intention of writing an article on the rehearsal of a ballet at his theatre, for *THE LUDGATE*, and asked his permission to witness the private performances, I was prepared for a refusal, but instead he readily acquiesced.

Armed with this consoling encouragement, I attended four or five rehearsals of the bright and merry "Up-to-date ballet divertissement," as the programme modestly calls it, of "A Day Off," which is now drawing crowds every night to the Alhambra. The author and stage-manager, Mr. Charles Wilson, the composer and conductor, Mr. George W. Byng, the ballet master, Signor Pratesi, and the assistant

stage-manager, Mr. Lytton Grey, were as ready and willing as Mr. Slater to put every facility in my way, and to these gentlemen I am greatly indebted for the groundwork of this article.

In the first place it should be mentioned that a ballet goes through three initial stages before its final production, viz., the rough rehearsal, the right-through rehearsal, and the dress rehearsal. The first-named is the most difficult, as the principals, the coryphées and the "extras" have to learn their parts, cues, dances, entrances and exits, from the unfinished material that rough rehearsals naturally produce. The girls form a picturesque group on the stage in their practice dresses, consisting generally of a blouse and dancing skirt, or knickerbockers. These assume all different colours: red, green, black, white, blue, and yellow blouses intermingle with charming effect, which is heightened by the variegated knickers, which are found to give more freedom to the legs than dancing skirts. A noticeable feature of the Alhambra girls is that they always look clean and neat in their practice skirts, and they take as much care of their outward appearance in rehearsal as they do when in stage costumes. One young lady, I noticed, ignored the usual red blouse and black knickers, or *vice versa*, by appearing in a practice dress of all terra-cotta colour, after the cut of the little boy in "Bubbles," and very pretty she looked in it.

The ballet master was on the stage directing the dances of the coryphées, with his wand of office, which is a formidable stick, about the size of a broom-handle, only much heavier, which he brandished and brought down on the stage with delightful frequency. As he shouted, "one, two, three, four, five, six," the girls danced the necessary steps to this time, and the ballet stick came down on the boards after each number was called, with a vehemence that spoke volumes for Signor Pratesi's muscles. This particular dance is rehearsed in the same way every day till perfect, but the thing is done so thoroughly, that no attempt is made to gloss over anything till every one concerned is quite at home in all the details.

In the meantime the orchestra is playing its best, and the ballet girls gradually drop into the time of the music, follow the evolutions of Mr. Byng's bâton, and know to a nicety when the ballet-master's stick is going to beat time on the boards. Occasionally the directions of the teacher do not act in unison with those of the conductor, then Mr. Byng confers with Mr. Wilson, who shouts out "Stop—all over again," and orchestra and ballet leave off playing and dancing with an unanimity which is remarkable. Then all over again the dance is rehearsed till the desired effect is attained.

During this time Mr. Wilson is all over the stage. He seems omnipresent, for wherever you look you seem to see that most genial and clever of stage-managers. One minute he is on the stage directing principals and chorus where to stand and how to act, and the next he is critically examining the effect from the stalls, while almost at the same moment, if you look upwards, you see him in the gods, to the dread of the scene-shifters and carpenters, who fear his eagle eye when he is up aloft. Down he comes on the stage directly, and you know he is there by the authoritative manner in which he shouts "Speak up distinctly, Miss," to a pretty young actress who has been given a part for the first time, and has not been accustomed to the honour.

And so this goes on till 1.30, commencing at 11 or 12, according to the exigencies of the ballet, when Mr. Wilson calls out "Half-an-hour's rest." Then there is a scuffle, and in a twinkling of an eye the vast Alhambra stage is empty, and the girls who had previously been showing their shapely legs in saltatory exercises are now enjoying their well-earned rest and their lunch of sandwiches. For this occasion only they are the occupants of the fashionable fauteuils, which they occupy with a delightful grace born from experience. Mr. Slater looks benignly on from his usual position in the middle of the third row, during rehearsal, which he oversees with a serenity of expression that Napoleon might have envied. The orchestra have meanwhile gone to their lunch, generally taken at the nearest

"pub," and you are given time for reflection, which is interrupted half-an-hour later by the scraping of the violins, and you then know that work commences again. "Now then, ladies," comes from the dulcet throat of Mr. Lytton Grey, and in a second the stage is filled with a crowd of smiling, chatting girls, and another scene is

with the third. When these are known to perfection the "rough" rehearsals are over, and the Thursday before the production of the ballet is devoted to the "right through" rehearsal, and the scenes are then taken seriatim with the addition of the scenery, which is gradually put up. As a rule the second stage is an easy one, as the company has been



EMILÉNÉ D'ALENÇON

*From Photo by REUTLINGER, Paris*

rehearsed. Then one of the principals is momentarily missing. Sig. Pratesi shouts for "Julie" or "Casi," for by those popular nicknames Miss Seale and Miss Casaboni, the principal dancers at the Alhambra, are familiarly known.

When the first scene has been practised to the satisfaction of the managers, similar work is performed through the second scene, and so on

so well drilled in the preliminary trials that the ballet is gone through with delightful smoothness, but a mistake on this occasion is serious, as the production is so near at hand. Then it is that Mr. Wilson's omnipresence is so distinctly manifest. One of the actors is not in his right place in the grouping; "You're not there," shouts the stage-manager, who knows the position of

every one concerned in all the scenes, with a minuteness that is truly wonderful. It requires a memory to know the exact spot to be occupied by the individual members of a company of about two hundred performers, which is continuously moving about and changing positions with lightning rapidity.

The manager has kindly furnished me with the exact number of people engaged in "A Day Off," and to most readers it will come as a surprise that as many as 174 persons are on the stage at one time in the ballet. The exact numbers are as follows. In the ballet there are sixty-four young ladies, thirty extra ladies, twenty supers, twenty-four choristers, twelve in small parts, and twenty-four principals. These figures do not, of course, include stage carpenters, scene shifters, nor limelight men, but only those actually engaged in the ballet itself, as seen by the audience. The stage-manager has them all in his experienced eye at one time, and can detect immediately if one is missing from his or her proper place. If a step in the dances of the ballet is wrong, then Sig. Pratesi exerts his authority, for he also is wonderfully quick in noticing a slip, or if the steps are not in time with the orchestra. Such rapid detection of errors comes intuitively from long experience, and Sig. Pratesi's experience of ballet is long, with a vengeance. He may be said to have been born in his profession. His grandfather was a celebrated Italian ballet master, and his father was the *maitre de ballet* at the famous Scala in Milan. His mother was a *prima ballerina* at La Scala, and on the death of Sig. Pratesi, sen., she married Marengo, who wrote the lovely music of "Excelsior," and other grand ballets. And, as a finishing touch to the ballet family, Sig. Pratesi's wife is also a dancer and teacher of repute, and is generally to be seen on the stage of the Alhambra in the morning, giving lessons to the aspiring lights of the dancing world.

At the right-through rehearsal the full ballet is rehearsed, and the groupings, and entrances and exits have to be gone through. Occasionally a wrong entrance or exit by one of the less important members, or a slight misunder-

standing as to the grouping of a band of coryphées will cause an entire scene to be rehearsed from the beginning, and this just at the time when the young ladies are congratulating themselves that they have gone through the scene without a hitch. It is annoying, but it has to be done, and done it is.

Then there is a look of dismay on the girls' faces, but there is no grumbling, and if to emphasise the enormity of the mistake that has been made, the stage manager shouts, in his severest tones, that if he sees one girl that does not go through her work satisfactorily at the next attempt, he will see that she does not go on on Monday, *i.e.*, on the first night. But the young ladies know how to take these awful threats, for Mr. Wilson is one of the kindest-hearted of stage-managers, and has gained the affection of the entire company. The very girl to whom he has directed this terrible denunciation might be seen, a few minutes later, going up in the most unabashed manner to the despot for some advice, which is given with an addition of a paternal pat on the cheek, and with the kindly addition of some words in which "my dear" are distinctly heard.

The all-important event is the following day, which heralds the arrival of the dress rehearsal. The press and privileged friends are invited to this interesting ceremony. The entire ballet is rehearsed for the first time in the new costumes. On this occasion the practice dresses are quite ignored, and the ladies of the company look resplendent with the aid of lovely gowns, for the production of which no expense is spared. M. Alias, the costumier, is a prominent figure at this ceremony, and he has to see if his latest creations give the effect that is required. Another important detail at this function is the photographing of the groups, but no plate from the camera, however perfect, can give the idea of the beauty of the Alhambra ballet that a personal visit to "A Day Off" imparts.

So many things have to be considered in the production of a ballet. The dresses must be costly, beautiful, and appropriate, and if, as in "A Day Off," the principal scene lies in Boulogne,



French fashions are the order of the day. Then the dancing must be somewhat "Frenchy," and the principals are allowed a certain licence to make their "business" as local and appropriate as possible. Then again, the blending of colours is a matter of deep consideration, and, in this respect, the Alhambra managers show themselves masters in the art. No prettier blending of colour has ever been seen in the dressing or mount-

that such lovely costumes, and so many, can be worn in a ballet, and what becomes of them afterwards. Generally, they find themselves adorning the figures of young ladies in provincial pantomimes, and it is no unusual thing for a theatrical manager to contract to buy the entire dresses at the finish of a ballet. Quite an ordinary dress would cost about £8, and the costumes of the principals average about £15. As



JULIE SEALE

ing of a ballet than in the gorgeous spectacle representing the Casino at Boulogne. And one other very important item—the music—which has to tell the tale as explicitly and concisely as pantomime or dialogue does. But Mr. Byng has supplied music to "A Day Off" of which there is no possible doubt whatever.

The public often wonder how it is

to the aggregate cost of producing an Alhambra ballet, the figures generally exceed £5,000.

Among so many varying scenes and changes, it is not surprising that some curious mistakes occur at times, producing some humorous situations. Mr. Wilson told me of a few in the rehearsal of "A Day Off," of which the following is an instance:



There are other "turns" at the Alhambra besides the ballet which require practising, but in the press of the more serious work, they are occasionally overlooked. On one particular morning, the acrobats performing at the theatre were timed to rehearse at 9.30, the bicyclists at 10.30, and the ballet at 11.30, but Mr. Slater had forgotten to mention to the stage manager that the "dogs" had to be rehearsed. The dog manager, however, turned up with his troupe, and insisted upon having the stage for a time. The acrobats would not give way, nor the bicyclists, and he decided to wait till the latter had finished and run over his performance with a pianist on the stage. But unfortunately time, tide, and stage managers wait for no man, and Mr. Wilson ordered the ballet to be rehearsed just as the dogs made a martial appearance on the stage. Soon there was glorious confusion. The stage piano was drowned by the full orchestra, the dogs yelped in the most discordant fashion, and the ballet ladies trod over the animals in trying to avoid them. The dog showman shouted to his pets to come off the stage, and Signor Pratesi did the same to his pupils, and all was going satisfactorily till four ballet ladies, who had for the moment lost their presence of mind, ran up to their dressing rooms, screaming at the top of their voices, followed by as many howling and intelligent dogs, whose sagacity was quite benumbed through the babel of confusion. Hurriedly the frightened girls bolted

themselves in their rooms, but their screams were drowned by the barks of the dogs outside, and so the pandemonium continued till the poor confused trainer found his way to the spot, and was able to call off the hounds, for once at fault.

On other occasions, Signor Pratesi and Mr. Byng would have a little difference as to the times of their different rehearsals. The former would require the stage for his coryphées, while the musical conductor would want it to rehearse some of the principals with the orchestra. It would be a case of rapid and poetic Italian against cool and prosaic English, or of ballet stick *v.* bâton, but as the pen is mightier than the sword, so is the bâton than the ballet stick, and in the end the accomplished conductor's wand would prevail.

Such incidents as these are inseparable from the rehearsal of a big ballet, but the misunderstanding is only temporary. The peacemaker, in Mr. Charles Wilson, appears on the scene, and soon everything goes as merrily as the proverbial marriage bell. Order is at once restored, everybody is satisfied, and the ruffled feelings are smoothed. The violins begin to emit their peculiar sound of "tuning," the ladies get into line, the *maître de ballet* takes his accustomed stand on the O. P. side, the conductor mounts his seat, the stage manager looks on with an equanimity that nothing can upset, and soon we are again in the whirl and excitement of a ballet in rehearsal.



# FOR EVER

# AND EVER



WRITTEN BY

JOHN STRANGE WINTER,

Author of "Bootles' Baby," "The Truth-Tellers," "Heart and Sword," etc., etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY SPENCER BLYTH.

## CHAPTER I.



HEY say that the unexpected always happens. I for years have been expecting the unexpected, but it cometh not, but still I live—praying that it will happen soon, drinking deep draughts from the fountain of hope and alas! quenching not my thirst.

But this story is not about myself; no! no! but about a little girl that I knew once, a little girl whose only portion, seemingly, was the unexpected. Her name was Mona; she was Irish and she was poor—for her station in life, that is, for her birth was good, though her up-bringing had been fragmentary. She had a charming voice and a lovely face, such a face as one hears of and sees seldom; a rose-leaf skin, a wealth of red-bronze hair, deep blue eyes put in with a dirty finger, a delicious little nose, and teeth like pearls. It was an *insonnante* little face, a very fair match for the wit that lay behind it. Yes, her name was Mona—Mona FitzGerald;

and when Mona FitzGerald was something over seventeen and something under twenty, she left her ancestral halls and came over to the country of the Sassenach.

Now the Chesneys, with whom Mona FitzGerald was staying, were her cousins. They lived under the blue wolds of Blankshire—not more than three miles from the old city of Blankhampton. They were not a rich or a powerful family, far from it, but the Priory was a charming, rambling old house, and the Chesneys had some three thousand a year on which to keep their position going.

To Mona FitzGerald it seemed that her English cousins must be people of enormous wealth. Goodness only knows how little the FitzGerald income was; while certainly the Castle, which had been the cradle of their race for generations, would have made at least three of Aldmanham Priory. At the Castle everything was luxuriously shabby. The rooms were rich in carved oak, and the velvet cushions of the same

were faded from crimson to a tawny hue, and frayed and torn in many places. The oaken floors were black with age, and the Turkey carpets were threadbare. It was everywhere the same, and outdoors as within. There were never such roses as bloomed in the Castle gardens, and yet, year after year, their luxuriance had become more and more rank. The violet-beds, which had once been the pride of the neighbourhood, had far over-spread their bounds, and had long ago degenerated into wildness. So when Mona FitzGerald came to Aldmanham Priory, and there was introduced to the spotless, speckless house, with its embroideries, its beautiful draperies, its well-swept carpets, and its well-cared-for furniture, it seemed to her that her English cousins must be rich beyond the dreams of avarice.

"Are all English houses like this?" she asked of Norah Chesney, the eldest of the two Chesney girls.

"Oh, yes; there is nothing out of the way about the Priory," Norah replied.

"Why, what do you mean, Mona?"

"Well, it is all so smart," the Irish girl said, "so very spick and span; and not only the house, but the gardens, the drive, the avenue, everything."

"Is it not so at the Castle?"

"Indeed and it is not," Mona declared promptly, with a soft laugh, which conveyed to her cousins something of the difference between the Castle and Aldmanham. "But then, you know, all the Irish land-owners are so poor—it is a fluke if we get any rent at all, and when you know how poor the people are, and you have known all their small affairs for generations past—why, they cannot be pressed. My father would rather die than over-press any of his people."

"He is popular?"

"Oh yes, but we don't keep up the gardens at the Castle nor the furniture inside it. How could you be spending money on new Turkey carpets when you know that the poor tenantry have scarcely got blankets to their beds?"

"What intensely unpleasant tenantry to have?" said Eileen Chesney.

"Oh, they are not unpleasant in themselves, they are just darlings," Mona declared; "and as for my father, they

worship the very ground he treads upon. They cannot help being poor," she flashed out, almost indignantly; "it is no fault of theirs, poor souls, that the land is so bad and the times are hard, and everything goes against them."

"What a little red-hot partisan it is," said Norah, patting the little Irish girl's hand. They were very tall, the Chesney girls, very tall and very good-looking, of a large, luxurious type, and looked down quite protectingly, with half-indulgent, half-amused smiles, upon their young Irish guest. As they had never been to Ireland, her declaration that the FitzGerald rent-roll amounted to nothing, and that they were as poor as poor could be, conveyed but little meaning, for Mona's step-mother, who was an Englishwoman, and moreover a woman of the world, had declared positively that she would not allow the child to go to visit her English cousins, unless she was provided with a suitable outfit for such an occasion. "My dear Duke," she said to her husband, when he declared that Mona looked very nice in her ordinary clothes, "my dear old Duke, it is the first time that Mona has been out into the world. Of course, her one little visit to Dublin was only a glimpse into society. Of the few things that she had then, there is not enough left to make a respectable show. You never know what comes of a long visit in a good English country house, and the Chesneys are people in a very good set, who entertain a good deal and go about in proportion. Mona must have a couple of good tailor-made dresses and several smart evening frocks, and those, with what I can have touched up and modernised from last season, will send her off very well; but, my dear old boy, fifty pounds I must have to make her presentable."

If the truth be told, Lady FitzGerald did not find that the fifty pounds, which her husband at last gave her, was sufficient to buy all that she thought necessary for the child's visiting trousseau, and several items were put down in her own accounts, to be pinched out of her modest dress allowance as best might be.

"Now, what are you going to wear to-night?" said Eileen Chesney, partly to turn the conversation away from burning subjects.

"To-night," said Mona brightly; "well, what is on, because I have got several dresses."

"Oh, there is not much on to-night. A couple of men from the barracks are coming over to dine, and Norah's young man will be over; that's all. Any little evening frock will do, only we wanted to know what?"

"I have two little evening frocks," said Mona. "I have a little black frock—it is really the same size as the others, you know, only it is simple—with fluffy sleeves and a bit of jet and gold with some turquoises on it, you know, round the bodice; and then I have a white

frock that is very much the same class of thing, and that has fluffy sleeves too, and a big pink sash."

"I should wear black, if I were you," said Eileen, "because we shall be giving a little dance next week—just a little informal thing—and there is nothing like white for a dance; so wear your little black frock to-night. Would you like a bunch of roses?"

"Well, thank you very much, I am never against a good thing," said Mona; "but if they were white roses, I should like them the best."

"I will see; I will send down to the gardener and find out what he has.



"SHALL I DISGRACE YOU?" SHE ASKED

Well, now, have you got everything you like? Don't you want a maid to do your hair?"

Mona FitzGerald laughed out loud. "Why, I should not know what to do with a maid if I had one," she declared. "All my frocks fasten somewhere where they don't show, because it is such a bother getting somebody else to lace them, and as for my hair—I have never had it done by anybody else in my life, so I shall be all right. Don't worry about me at all."

She certainly did look all right; to use her own phrase, when she tapped at the door of Eileen's bedroom and asked her for admittance.

"Shall I disgrace you," she asked rather anxiously.

"Why, no, indeed, that you won't," exclaimed Eileen, gazing at her with open admiration. "Oh, but you little people do have a pull over us great lanky ones!"

"Well, I don't know so much about that," Mona returned. "You are both engaged to be married. I don't know where the pull comes in."

"Norah!" Eileen called out to her sister, who was in the adjoining room. "Just come and look at this little Pixie in her 'little black frock!' Why, she is a perfect dream. I wonder if either of those young men who are coming to-night is any good!"

"Don't say such things," cried Norah reprovingly; "I am surprised at you, Eileen."

Thus snubbed, Eileen turned laughingly away, but all the same her outspoken admiration for her Irish little-known cousin served to put Mona on very good terms with herself. The Irish girl was not shy, and yet she had felt this coming to a strange country and among a strange people, and into a strange family—although they were her relations—to be no small ordeal.

There was only one other girl staying in the house besides Mona, so that the party at dinner numbered ten in all.

When the three girls went down to the drawing-room together, three of the expected men had arrived; two of them were the soldiers from Blankhampton Barracks, one Captain Somers, and the other the lieutenant of his troop, Lord

Guilderoy; the third was Ralph Vansittart, a neighbouring land-owner, and the *fiancé* of Eileen Chesney. "Norah's young man," a rising young barrister, John Markham by name, was staying at Aldmanham, and he also made his appearance before the last guest of all showed herself. When she did come, she impressed the Irish girl as she had never been impressed before. Miss Brancepeth was at least ten years older than Mona, had been a London beauty for several years, indeed I may say a noted beauty, and what she lacked against the young Irish girl in charm and youth and loveliness, she more than made up for by the graces of her person and manner. Mona had never seen anything like her. She had the smallest of hands and feet, the tiniest little waist, an ample bust and the biggest eyes, dark as night, and an inheritance in themselves. Her hair was Titian-red, her eye-brows black, her manner weary and a little listless. She was the typical London girl of fashion, who has been out for eight or ten years, and kept the same status as when she began. To Mona her dress, too, was a thing of wonder. It was black and glittered in parts. It fitted like a sheath in one place and like miniature billows in another. A great big jet dagger was thrust through the masses of her rich-hued hair, and depending from her throat was a chain of pearls, which must have been at least three yards in length. She wore many rings, and, attached to her waist, was a long silver chain, at the end of which hung a huge silver flexible fish.

When Mona was presented to the new comer she felt as if she had for the moment been put under a microscope, as if the scrutinising black eyes did not think much of her. In truth, she was not very far wrong, for Miss Nadith Brancepeth had in her own mind summed her up in half-a-dozen sentences; "So this is the wild Irish cousin—very pretty—young—Irish—ingenuous—a little raw—not a dangerous rival."

"How do you do?" she said sweetly, "so charmed to meet you!" Then she turned her attention to the two young men, and did not bestow so much as a glance upon Mona again.



Mona sat at the table between her uncle and John Markham, and so was opposite to Lord Guilderoy.

I scarcely know how to tell you what followed. She was very young, very inexperienced, quite unknowing of the world, for in her restricted sphere she had, up to that time, reigned as a young queen. She had not known many young men, not one that had taken her fancy,—but this Guilderoy, with his clean-cut English face, his steady, calm, unruffled manner, his ready and yet slightly wooden courtesy, was as a point of flame held to a bundle of tow, who—without so much as casting a single glance of interest at the girl, set the untutored heart on fire.

"Well," said Norah, as the two girls came bustling into Mona's bedroom just to see that she was comfortable and had everything she wanted, "well, what do you think of your first English dinner-party?"

"Hardly a dinner party, Norah," said Eileen.

"Yes, it was a dinner party; ten people are a dinner party. What did you think of my young man?" she added to Mona.

"I thought he was just lovely," said Mona promptly.

"You didn't think he was lovelier than my young man, surely?" cried Eileen. "I never thought Ralph Vansittart half good enough for Norah. Now my young man——"

"Oh, we all know your young man is perfection," said Norah good-naturedly. "The fact is, we are two lucky girls, and they are two lucky young men. But the others—what do you think of Guilderoy?"

"He is just perfect, Norah," cried Mona, without any attempt to conceal her real opinion.

"Yes, he is a good looking-fellow, and he has a nice manner, and all that. I like Lord Guilderoy very much, but how silly he makes himself over Nadith Brancepeth. He cannot marry her—she has got no money."

"Has he no money? Is he Irish?" said Mona mournfully.

"No, he is not Irish, but he has very little money, and Nadith has none, so that it is no use their thinking about each

other or spoiling better people's chance. I do think it is so silly for people to go in for hopeless love affairs; it is so tiresome."

"But are they in love with each other?" said Mona eagerly.

"Well, it does look like it, does it not? He comes over every day that he can make a decent excuse, and she hangs on week after week—we are getting heartily sick of her. I should not be at all surprised if she held on here till leave season sets in."

"Leave season? What leave season?"

"Why, the Army leave season, of course."

"Oh, well," put in Eileen, "after all, we're very glad to have Nadith; we have always been very fond of her, and of course the Mater and Dad are very fond of her, too; so that, all said and done, we don't particularly want to get rid of her, Norah!"

"No, no, I didn't mean anything so inhospitable; but she has been here an unconscionable time, and she is rather difficult to entertain, isn't she? Particularly when we have our own fish to fry?"

"If you keep on like that Mona will think we shall be frightened of her if she stays more than a few days," exclaimed Norah.

"Now, you are sure you have everything you want?—and remember, that if you should happen to need anything in the night, you have only to come to the door exactly opposite to this and knock, or come in—I don't lock it. So, be sure that you don't stand upon ceremony if you don't feel well, you know, dear, or anything of the kind; and we'll come and look you up in the morning. Breakfast? yes; you will have your tea and toast about eight, and breakfast is between nine and ten. Good night, darling; hope you will sleep well."

When she was left once more alone, Mona sat down on a little stool before the fire, for there was a fire, although it was but early Autumn, and thought over the events of the wonderful day. For it had been a wonderful day for her, a glimpse into a new world, into a smoother, more cultivated, more luxurious world than her own; a world whose chariots ran on oiled wheels, a world

in which the chairs were all softly cushioned, a deliciously delicately seasoned world, a world of ease and brightness, wherein things could hardly go wrong.

## CHAPTER II.

A few days later, Mona FitzGerald received a letter from her step-mother :

"Dearest little Mona," it ran (and by the bye, I have not told you that Mona and her step-mother were on the most tender and intimate terms one with another), "Dearest little Mona, First of all, let me advise you to keep this letter to yourself for reasons which I will tell you. We have had a letter from the lawyers of your poor god-mother, Lady Charlotte. She died the day before yesterday. I know that you will be sorry for this, because she was very sweet and good, and, latterly, her sufferings have been something terrible ; and you must try to forget any grief that you may feel, and be only glad that she should be released from her sufferings, for there was never any chance that she should find any relief save in death. Your father had also a letter from her maid, Theodora, whom, of course, you cannot have forgotten. Lady Charlotte has left her comfortably provided for during her life-time, with reversion to yourself ; that is to say, she has left her two hundred pounds a year, which will come to you at her death. Theodora tells your father that Lady Charlotte's last words were : 'There shall be no more pain,' which tells a pathetic story of what she must have gone through in those later days. To yourself in the actual present, she leaves five hundred a year, which, dear child, will make all the difference to you now and afterwards. I think that it will be better if you say nothing about your god-mother's death or her legacy to you, because the Chesneys might think it necessary for you to curtail your visit and go into mourning. As Lady Charlotte did not live near us, and was not known to the Chesneys, I think it an unnecessary expense to incur, and that it certainly is not needful to curtail your present pleasant visit. I am sending to the funeral, which is on Monday, a wreath in your name from Dublin. The neighbourhood here is extremely quiet

just now, nothing of any moment has happened since you left home, excepting that the Shetland pony has a very beautiful foal, which promises to be quite as lovely as his mother. Your father sends his fondest love to you, and I am, as ever, with many kisses, your affectionate mother, AGNES FITZGERALD."

It seemed to Mona, as she sat with that letter in her hand, as if the very heavens had opened before her. Five hundred pounds a year, to say nothing of the additional two hundred which would come to her on the death of her god-mother's faithful old maid ! What would she not be able to do with five hundred pounds a year ? She would be able to ease the strain at home, to pay her own personal expenses, to make her dear, affectionate step-mother presents from time to time ! She planned it all out in that five minutes—a hundred ways of spending five hundred a year—very much after the manner of the little boy with his first half-crown :—"I have got half-a-crown," said the urchin, "I am going to buy that jeweller's shop with it."

She gave a few sighs to the memory of her god-mother, of whom she had seen but little ; but, if the truth be told, the wonderful fortune which had come to her far outweighed any other feeling. Then she realised that she would be the last to appear at the breakfast table, and hurried through her toilet, going down presently in one of her smart tailor-built dresses, with a face so radiant, with such a pair of shining eyes, that Mrs. Chesney remarked upon her looks at once. "Why, Mona," she exclaimed ; "surely you must have had pleasant dreams, or good news, or something this morning. You look as blooming as a rose, my dear ; I believe our Blankshire air suits you better than your native Ireland."

"Thank you, Cousin Margaret. I do feel particularly well this morning," she said, stammering slightly.

"My dear," said Mrs. Chesney, confidentially to her eldest daughter afterwards, "keep your eye on that little girl. Who is it ?"

"Who is who, Mother darling ?"

"The cause of her altered looks. Don't let her waste her heart over Gunderoy ; he is no good to any girl, not even to Nadith Brancepeth."

Norah laughed. "Guilderoy would be good enough if he had any money, or, at least, if he had sufficient of it," said Norah sagely. "But, with all his philandering, I don't believe that he means to make Nadith Lady Guilderoy."

"Well, that's his business, not ours," remarked Mrs. Chesney sensibly. "Only I don't want him to be putting ideas into the child's head which, perhaps, might make her unhappy afterwards."

"Very well, I will keep my eyes open," said Norah, in her downright, sensible fashion.

But, with the best intentions in the world, I must confess that Norah Chesney did not keep her attention very closely fixed upon her young Irish cousin. You see, she was engaged herself, and as her young man was staying in the house, she naturally spent most of her time with him. Then Miss Nadith, to the relief of the entire household, brought her visit to an end and went away.

It was quite an affecting leave-taking. The whole party at Aldmanham drove into Blankhampton in the omnibus, which the Chesneys always used when they had a large party to convey here or there, and had tea at Bonner's, the celebrated confectioner's in St. Thomas' Street; and amongst others, Lord Guilderoy came to join the parting feast. Then the whole gathering went up to the station to see Miss Nadith off by the four o'clock express.

"And now, Lord Guilderoy," said Eileen mischievously, as he was standing at the door of the omnibus, "I suppose we have seen our last of you?"

"Really, I don't see why," said Lord Guilderoy in his ready steady voice.

Eileen laughed. "Oh well, the reason is a little obvious, is it not?"

"You seem to think so," he returned.

"Does that mean that my room is preferable to my company at the Priory?"



"IT WAS QUITE AN AFFECTING LEAVE-TAKING"

"Oh no, no, I didn't mean that at all. We shall always be delighted to see you, but now that Nadith is gone——" she broke off in a silence that was more eloquent than words.

Lord Guilderoy took her quite seriously. "Do you wish me to suppose," he said, looking Eileen steadily in the face, "that you have only tolerated me so far as an appendage of Miss Nadith's? Because if that is so, I shall certainly not come to the Priory any more."

"Oh, but I didn't mean that at all," she cried, wishing she had not spoken at all.

"Well, if it really is not so, I shall make my appearance before very long," he said, as he raised his hat.

"Oh, Eileen," said Mona, as the carriage rolled away, "how could you say such a thing to him?"

"My dear child, why not?"

"But to joke him about——Oh, how cruel of you, Eileen!"

"Cruel! Oh, my dear, it is no use petting up men and letting them think too much of themselves. Don't trouble your dear little heart about those two—they're both worldlings who can take very good care of themselves. She has been amusing herself at the Priory, when she had nothing better to do, and had no convenient invitations to fill up these few weeks. My dear, there is no glamour about us—we know exactly what Nadith thinks of us, and we never sham to each other. She says that Lord Guilderoy has proposed to her every time he came over, and that she always refuses him because he has not money enough."

"But she must be rich," cried Mona?

"Nadith!" echoed Eileen. "No, Nadith is not rich—Nadith is about as poor as a young lady of fashion very well can be. She is a worldling, my dear child, to the very tips of her fingers."

"Don't you think she cares for him?" cried Mona.

"Hush!" cried Eileen in warning tones, as the carriage passed from the cobble stones to a strip of wood pavement. "Don't let the others hear you. Care for him? Oh, in a sort of a way she does. She would take him fast enough if he had fifteen thousand a year, or ten or five, but he has not, poor fellow. He is about as poor as he can be to be Lord Guilderoy, and will be poor till all the charges on the estate are paid off; it will be twelve or fifteen years, I believe, before he is free, and do you think a girl like Nadith, who has been brought up to think of marriage as a market, is going to waste her time and opportunities over somebody who has not more than two or three thousand a year? Indeed, I doubt if he has as much, and there is Guilderoy to keep up all the time. Oh, you little know these fashionable women, my dear! If they have hearts, they keep them in such order that nobody is any the wiser, and I don't know that they suffer a throb themselves in consequence. Nadith will marry to make a settlement, not because of any fid-fads about fancy and liking."

"Eileen, you are horrid," burst out Mona.

"I may be horrid," said Eileen, with a good-natured laugh, "but it is all true, every word of it, and he——"

"Do you think he has really ever proposed to her so often, or at all?"

"I don't know—I have never been able to make up my mind about him, yet I think he likes her, but I am not quite sure. One never knows with a man unless one is the girl oneself. Well, yes, I think he is a little bit bitten, but there!—he is a man of the world, and a man doesn't go bleating around because some girl he fancies does not see her way to marry him—not a man who admires girls like Nadith."

The Irish girl choked down an indignant reply. She put her head back against the corner of the carriage and relapsed into silence. Her heart was sore for the heart-ache of the man whom she would have given anything to have as a lover herself. It did seem hard, her thoughts ran, that such a love should be thrown away upon one who did not value it, though of course, a man of that kind would never under any circumstances think of looking at a little wild Irish girl like Mona FitzGerald; "but," she argued, "if he were my lover how gladly I would, for his sake, give up the whole world. How can she care so little for him that she could go smiling away, just as if she were going on the most pleasant visit imaginable, and not give a thought to the aching heart she was leaving behind? Why should the love of such a man be thrown away on such a woman? Oh, how hard things are—how—how badly everything arranges itself."

She was quite sad that night. She sat for a long time in her bed-room gazing into the heart of the fire that was burning in the grate, and wished, yes, wished, that she could transfer that wonderful fortune of hers to him, and so let him be happy with the woman of his heart; and yet, Eileen had said something about two or three thousand a year not being enough for her. Then, what would five hundred be to a woman like that? A mere drop in the ocean. There were tears on the girl's eye-lids as she, at last, shook herself out of her reverie; and though she got into bed, she lay wide awake far into the night. But the end



of all her thinking was to no purpose, and she had no choice but to admit that no matter how badly Fate might choose to arrange for the children of this world, Fate will not be interfered with ; at all events, in making or marring the fate of Lord Guilderoy and Nadith Brancepeth, she, Mona FitzGerald, could have no hand.

### CHAPTER III.

Two days later, Lord Guilderoy drove over to the Priory.

"Is it really you?" Eileen exclaimed.

"I believe, Miss Eileen, that there is no mistake about my identity," said Lord Guilderoy, with a bland air of urbanity.

"Well, of course we are all delighted to see you,—how could we be otherwise?" she declared; "but Norah has gone out with John Markham, and I was just going out myself."

"Miss FitzGerald promised me a game of tennis one day," suggested Lord Guilderoy, in his smoothest tones.

"Oh, yes, I am sure she will be delighted, I am sure she will; and she plays a stunning game. Let us go and see where she is. Mona, here is Lord Guilderoy!" she called out, as she caught a glimpse of Mona's white dress on the lawn.

"I came over to see if you would give me that promised game of tennis, Miss FitzGerald," said Lord Guilderoy quite humbly.

"With pleasure," said Mona. "But what are you going to do, Eileen?"

"Well, the fact is," returned Eileen, "I have a previous engagement. Ralph and I faithfully promised to drive over to see somebody this afternoon, but—but—" cheerfully, "you two will be able to play tennis all the time, won't you; and Mother will be in about five; but you need not wait till five to have some tea, need you? Varley will bring it as soon as you ring for him."

Having thus unceremoniously arranged the afternoon for the two, Eileen whisked herself away in a great hurry, lest any new complication should arise which might prevent her keeping her engagement with Ralph Vansittart.

"Lord Guilderoy," said Mona, turning her grave young face upon him, for she was still over-pressed by the shadow of

his trouble, "you never asked me to play tennis with you!"

"I know it, Miss Mona," he said very meekly; "but, in this world, one has to make opportunities if none make themselves. We could not possibly propose to spend all the afternoon talking to each other, whereas, the tennis gives us a legitimate excuse for passing the whole afternoon just as it suits our taste. Of course, it is rather hot for tennis," he said ingeniously. "Now, if I might propose—you see I know this neighbourhood so much better than you do—if I might propose, there is a little spinney just across that corner by the Park, through which brawls a little stream, and by the side of the stream, there are some fallen trunks of trees. It is cool, and extremely pretty, most picturesque, in fact—and there we might improve the shining hour to our mutual advantage."

"I don't know that spinney," said she doubtfully, "and I think it is very hard upon you—at least, I mean—is it not rather—or I should say—"

"Yes, Miss FitzGerald, I am all attention."

"There has not been a letter from her," Mona burst out. "They were wondering at lunch how it was she had not written a single word."

"A letter from her—from whom?"

"Why, why from Miss Brancepeth, of course."

Guilderoy's face changed. "Oh, are you quite sure?" he asked.

"I am quite sure," said Mona. "She has not written a word to one of us—I mean, to one of them, for she would not write to me, of course, in any case."

"Well," said Lord Guilderoy deliberately; "then the spinney is off. I must propose something else. Let me see—it is rather warm to-day for this time of the year, a sort of Indian summer, is it not? And yet, there is a chill in the air—a very decided chill, don't you think so, Miss Mona? Now, round on that side of the house, there is a sort of conservatory; it is the favourite conversation corner of whichever young lady happens to get there first. They are both safely out of the road, so let us go and take possession of it, and then I will consult you about—about various things."



Mona's heart sank. Evidently he was going to consult her about Nadith Brancepeth.

"You said," remarked Lord Guilderoy, as soon as she had seated herself in a big deck chair, "you said something significant just now about 'her' and 'she.' Why should you imagine that every personal pronoun, feminine singular—should apply to Miss Brancepeth?"

"Well, I naturally thought that you

"But you asked,"—Mona began, and then broke off sharply.

"I asked?—Yes, what did I ask? Not for any news of Miss Brancepeth when I suggested that spinney."

"Oh no, I did not mean that, I did not mean that."

"Then what did you mean? That I was what?"

Mona flushed and began to tremble. She felt as if she had put her foot into



"LORD GUILDEROY LEANT FORWARD IN HIS CHAIR"

would take an interest in her," said Mona in a tone of self-defence.

Lord Guilderoy drew another chair of large dimensions opposite to hers. "I suppose your cousins," he said, "have been telling you tales about me. They have been making you think that I am specially and deeply interested in Miss Brancepeth. Well, in a way, I am. I have known her for a long time, and she is always pleased to bestow a certain amount of her attentions upon me, and that is all."

it, and yet, there was something in his face which compelled an answer. "Oh, Lord Guilderoy," she burst out at last, "why do you make believe *when we all know*—when some of us are so sorry?"

"For me? You were sorry for me?"

"Oh, yes."

"But why?"

"Because of her," she stammered.

"Another personal pronoun, feminine singular. How very curious this lesson in analysis is. You were sorry for me

because of *her*. Does it again stand for Miss Brancepeth? Do you all think that I am in love with Miss Brancepeth? Because if you do, let me tell you that you are wrong. I have never been seriously in love but once in all my life, and that was with a little girl who is the exact antithesis of Nadith Brancepeth."

"And she has refused you?" cried Mona incredulously.

"No, she has not refused me," he replied coolly; "at least, not yet—because, you see, I have not yet asked her. I have been watching her and comparing her with—with others, and wondering whether she was a worldly little girl and would hesitate to take a man because he did not happen to be rich."

"She would be a beast," flashed out Mona, without any suspicion that he was speaking of herself.

"Do you think so?" said he.

"Perhaps she has money," said Mona, "and would not mind."

"I do not think," said Lord Guilderoy, "that she has a penny—not many pennies, anyway. Well now, should you think I had any chance?"

"I could tell you better if I had seen the girl," said Mona, looking up at him.

Lord Guilderoy leant forward in his chair and caught hold of her hand. "Mona," he said, "cannot you see her in my eyes?"

"But I have a penny," said Mona presently. "I have heaps of pennies."

"What!" he exclaimed incredulously.

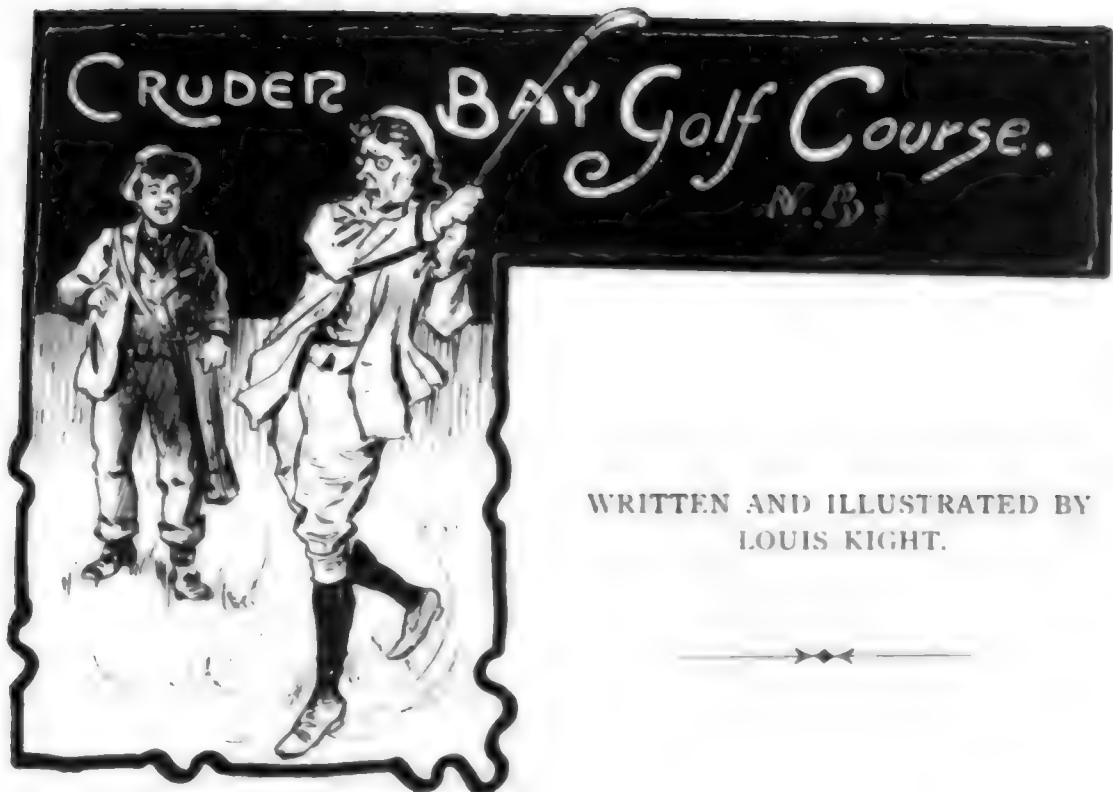
"Oh, yes!"

"But your cousins have always spoken about you as being so poor."

"But my cousins don't know," cried Mona, "that I am far from poor—that I have a whole five hundred pounds a year—of my very own—to do what I like with. Do you know," she went on—"that, the other night when we were coming home from the station, I was wishing that I could give you my five hundred pounds a year to—to help to make you happier."

"Did you now," said he. "Well, the Lord knows there never was a man less proud than I; so I will take your offer, my dear, and yourself into the bargain. And as I would like to do everything in a thoroughly business-like way, I will pay you the interest in love for ever and ever."





WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY  
LOUIS KIGHT.



**G**OLF: a Scottish game of ball. The players number one or more on each side, and each is provided with a separate ball. The more skilful player is he who can land his ball in a given series of holes with the fewest strokes of his club. Thus, briefly and tersely, are the intricacies of the ancient game of golf set forth for the instruction of the student in a certain cyclopædia, published some fourteen years ago. The editors of that publication estimated the interest in the game at that period with reasonable accuracy, and allotted a proportionately moderate space to their allusions.

It is within the last decade that the mighty wave of enthusiasm for golf has spread over the South, and, later than that, has the recoil reached the far North, the nursery and home of the pastime. 'Tis a poor suburb of London that does not boast of, at least, one links.

The common lands are appropriated to the infinite jeopardy of the unwary nursemaid or elderly pedestrian

ignorant or deaf to the significance of the portentous "Fore!" that is intended to indicate that all and sundry should run for their lives.

The owners of arid wastes of land ornamented by disused sandpits, who had despaired of profit from farming or the erection of "desirable villa residences," have reaped substantial rentals by the conversion of their desert properties into golf courses. Our sea-coast towns have taken advantage of the golfing craze, and the cliffs and moorlands of the South resound with the click of the cleek and the ring of the driver.

But Scotland is the home of golf, and it is the ambition of the Southern golfer to wield his clubs on classic ground.

St. Andrews has long held undisputed sway as an ideal links, not because there is no other site to equal it, but because no other course with equal or superior advantages had been developed. The historic interest of St. Andrews remains unchallenged, but its natural advantages as links are challenged.

Far away in the North of Scotland, thirty miles beyond Aberdeen, on the



Great North of Scotland Railway, lies Cruden Bay, and there is to be found the mighty rival to St. Andrews.

From countless time this natural golf course has been there, inaccessible, rugged, and swept by winter tempests. The railway company have altered much of this. From Aberdeen the trains take one almost to the doors of a huge hotel, built of Scotch granite, but designed by a southern architect. The granite is a guarantee of its stability; the Southern architect has guaranteed a reasonable use of the material, with the result that the hotel is palatial and rich with luxury and comfort.

Immediately in front of the hotel lie the golf links. In the language of a local authority, "they abound in hazards calculated to

test the most experienced golfer in every department of the game; while here and there can be detected a well-kept 'green,' smooth as a billiard table, and affording scope for the utmost dexterity in 'putting.' Beyond is the

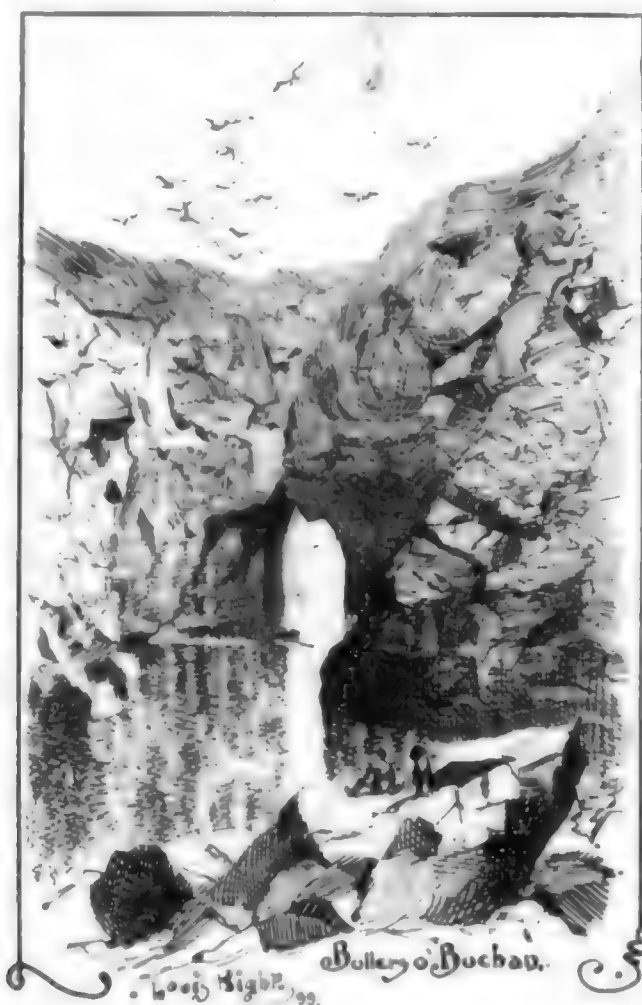


NEAR THE HOTEL

German Ocean, reflecting the tints of the passing clouds, and fringed with reefs and cliffs which constitute a most interesting bit of coast scenery."

The links were opened late in April, the inauguration ceremony taking the form of an "open professional handicap" for prizes amounting to £120. There were some twenty-eight entries, including the most potent names in the

for the adventurous explorer. It will be a matter of surprise to some that Dr. Samuel Johnson should have visited a place that, in his time, must have been indeed out of the way. Nevertheless, the Doctor acted as a pioneer for the present-day tourist and has set down his experiences at the *Bullers o' Buchan*, locally known as "*Birs' Buchan*," of which a sketch is given. Thus pom-



golfing world. Harry Vardon, the professional champion, was there, and proved the conqueror. Andrew Kirkaldy, Braid, Fernie, Sayers, Archie Simpson (the Aberdeen Balgownie Links professional), and Kinnell were among the competitors.

Apart from golf, the neighbourhood of Cruden Bay is full of interest. The two miles of golden beach afford excellent opportunity for bathing and boating, and the rugged coast-line affords scope

pously said Dr. Johnson: "We found ourselves in a place which, though we could not think ourselves in danger, we could scarcely survey without some recoil of the mind. The basin in which we floated was nearly circular, perhaps thirty yards in diameter. We were enclosed by a natural wall, rising steep on every side to a height which produced the idea of insurmountable confinement. The interception of all lateral light caused a dismal gloom. Round us was a per-

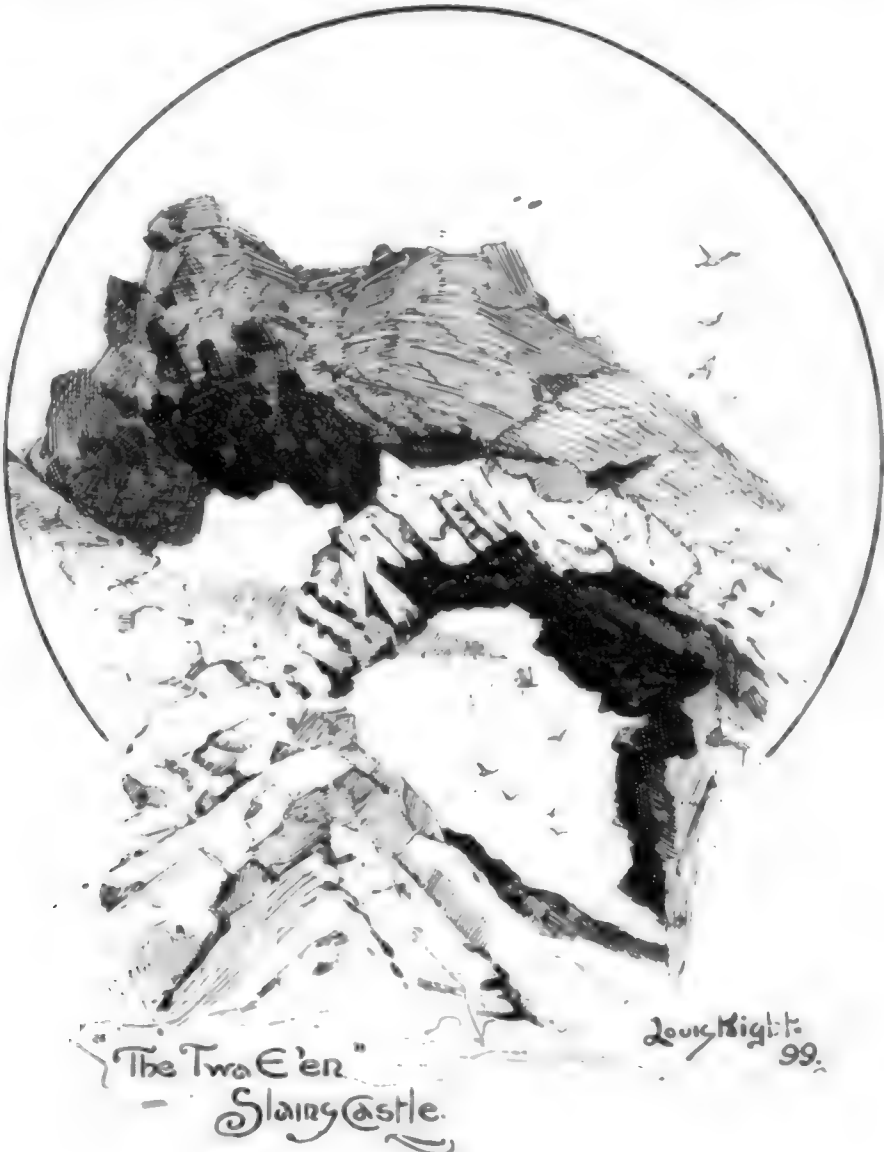


pendicular rock, above us the distant sky, and below us an unknown profundity of water. If I had any malice "against a walking spirit, instead of laying him in the Red Sea, I would condemn him to reside in the Buller Buchan." The faithful and attendant Boswell's views on this perilous venture are not recorded.

On the bluff high granite headland, that shelters Cruden Bay on the north, stands the modern Slains Castle, the seat of the Earls of Erroll, almost insulated and approached only by a narrow isthmus. Not far from the castle is a curious cave which opens to the sea below water-mark, runs horizontally for a considerable distance into the rock, and then rises until it comes to the sur-

face in a field some way from the edge of the cliff. From the rolling of the waves into this cavern below, an atmospheric current is created sufficiently strong to blow into the air any light article thrown into the upper aperture of the cave. In easterly gales a column of spray rises from it high into the air. The local name for the cave is "Hellum," which being interpreted is "Hell's Chimney," *lum* being Scottish for chimney.

As a golfer, the writer is in the front rank of novices; but the air of Cruden Bay spells golf. So, on the succeeding day, following in the wake of twenty-eight of the finest professional golfers, he was induced to try the merits of the course that rivals the best in the king-





dom. It is not necessary to enter into every detail of the uncompleted round, nor to allude at length to the damage done to tees and drivers, which latter, incidentally be it recorded, were borrowed; but it may be of interest to record the evolution of the patient caddie's smile, and to note that the same caddie had on the preceding day accompanied one of the crack expositors of the game. However, there were not many onlookers, and beyond a strained wrist, a damaged driver, and some injured tees, there was little harm done;

and some good came of it, for a scoffer was converted.

To revert to the glories of Cruden Bay. Probably on no part of our coast have the elements played such pranks with the rocky armour designed to resist them. In the Twa E'en, the Sugarloaf, the Water's Mou', the Dun Buy, are to be seen evidences of the mighty contest between wind and water on the one side, opposed to the solid granite headlands that protect the coast-line from the ravages of Northern storms. The Dun Buy Rock has been rendered classical by Sir Walter Scott's introduction to the story of "The Antiquary." "'Are ye mad?' said the mendicant; 'Francie o' Fowl's—heugh, and he was the best craigsman that ever speeled a heugh (mair by token, he brak his neck on the Dun Buy of Slains), and na hae ventured upon the Halket Head craigs after sundown.'" These rocks form a secure breeding-place of thousands of sea-fowl, and when the sun shines on them, lighting up their reflection in the deep emerald and purple-tinted waters, the sight is indeed impressive, and one is grateful for the enterprise of the railway company that has brought such scenes within our reach.

Those who were present at the opening of the Cruden Bay Golf Course, and were privileged to meet Mr. A. Govan Reid, the traffic manager of the Great North of Scotland Railway, were enabled to learn from this courtly Scottish gentleman (who, by the way, is a brother of Sir Wemyss Reid, editor of *The Speaker*) some interesting facts in connection with the vastness of the enterprise. The sum of £80,000 was expended in the building of the Cruden Bay Hotel and the development of the golf course. The natural advantages of the district for the purposes of golf have



FOLLOWING A CHAMPION

been long known, but it was hardly to be supposed that so vast a sum would be forthcoming for the purpose of adaptation.

The railway company, however, seem to have been prophetic in their anticipations, for apart from the enthusiasm of the Southern golfer, which will surely tempt him to the far North, it would seem that the management had a notion that members of the Royal family, during their visits to Balmoral, which is on the Great North of Scotland Railway, would be tempted to try their skill on the adjacent links of Cruden.

The Prince of Wales has started to play in the South of Europe, and it is not unreasonable to expect that he will not confine his efforts to so remote a course.


A score of our foremost professional golfers (including the champion), from North and South, have testified to the excellence of the links; but here is country that should be painted by Robert Allan, Colin Bent Phillips, and David Murray in his more robust moods. It is an invigorating country, full of colour, light and shade, ever moving, and there is blue sky.



# *A Corner of Alaska Worth Seeing*

WRITTEN BY LINCOLN WILBAR.

ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS.

UT of the two months that we spent in cruising along the Alaskan coast, there were perhaps ten days that could be called pleasant. This is not counting the mornings before it began to rain, or the afternoons when it cleared up. All the other days were either foggy or rainy, and not infrequently both, so that when the old residents told us that the season was exceptionally pluvial, we were somewhat sceptical on the point. We had an idea, and we did not hide its light under a bushel, that all seasons are exceptionally rainy in Uncle Sam's North-Western territory, and that our informants were influenced by patriotism to minimise the amount of the rainfall, which was given as one hundred inches, not including the precipitation of fog.

Having but recently come from Southern California, where the meteorological condition is irritating and protracted dryness, the excessive rainfall of Alaska proved most depressing to us. It began to rain very soon after we passed the International Boundary, and a dismal soak accompanied us pretty constantly throughout the trip. By the time Wrangel was reached we had seen rain enough to copiously irrigate the Sahara desert, and we asked a tired-looking man on the pier where all the rain came from. He was chewing tobacco, and he spat a large amber-coloured stream into the water reflectively.

"Well," said he, and we knew that he was a Yankee, "back East we say it

comes from the Lord, but hereabouts it comes from the devil."

This retort, like Ben Jonson's reply to Sylvester, contained more truth than poetry.

Wrangel, formerly called Fort Wrangel, is interesting historically through having been the scene of many a conflict between the Hudson's Bay Company and one of the early governors of Russian Alaska, from whom the town is named. There are very few souvenirs of Russian occupation left in the vicinity, however, nor is there much of other interest, barring, of course, the curious totem poles, which are the insignia of the "first families" of Alaskan Indians. Once popularly supposed to be symbols of worship, these poles are now known to be literally heraldic trees, the rude carvings indicating the line of descent of the family from some famous progenitor.

The finest carved totem pole in Wrangel, and probable in Alaska, has a whale's head at the top and a crow at the bottom, the twenty-five feet of space intervening between these two symbols being occupied by a curious conglomeration of figures, to understand which would require the services of an expert mystagogue.

As with other Indian nations, the tribes of Alaska are divided into families, among which stand out saliently the bear, wolf, whale, eagle, and crow branches. Members of one family must marry with members of another family, a breach of this tribal law bringing social ostracism upon the delinquents, and debarring them from totem pole

privileges. Every great event in the family life is commemorated upon its totem pole by the addition of a suitable figure, while a blot on the family escutcheon is represented by a toad—the *bar sinister* of the Alaska Indian.

Like all frontier towns, Wrangel lacks grace and beauty of architecture. Its houses appear to have started out in life as the prey of despair, and its streets are execrable. Pedestrianism in Wrangel during the winter must be highly dangerous. Some of the streets are made of planks elevated some height above the ground, and as the planking

the theory and practice of this to the buying of groceries on one hand and the sale of same on the other, we have a large stock of pure enjoyment to put to the credit of the seller.

Being in want of supplies, we went to interview a grocer, who had been recommended to us as a "strictly honest man." He was not in, and our dealings were with his twin brother. This person was not in the least honest, and when he told us that he was "the other twin"—the "real *bond fide* twin," we knew him for a base impostor.

He was hopelessly depraved. So were



A STREET IN WRANGEL

does not reach from one side of the roadway to the other, there is great danger of falling over the edge in the dark and breaking one's neck. Unfortunate as this would be for a denizen of more hospitable localities, temporarily sojourning in the town, to the weary-looking inhabitants of Wrangel it would not be so bad a fate.

Still, life there undoubtedly has its bright side. Grocerying, for instance, must be an occupation from which great enjoyment can be derived. It is one of the tenets of life that one man's pain is another man's pleasure, and extending

his eggs. He sold us four dozen infant fowls sadly in need of sanitation, a half-peck of dried peas somewhat vermiculous, a five-pound pail of fresh butter well endowed with the means of self-defence, an odoriferous and maggoty ham, and a slab of india-rubber bacon. He then proceeded to charge for these as if he thought that we tied our dogs with sausages.

From Wrangel, to Taku Inlet, near Juneau, is a distance of perhaps two hundred miles, rather less than more; but the geographical distances are so elastic in those regions, that a hundred



miles either side of accuracy doesn't matter. All the way the marine and landscape views are of the finest—alternating mountain peak and umbrageous valley, gleaming glacier and cascading stream, rocky wooded islands and winsome bays and sounds; the culmination of all these scenic effects being attained when Taku Inlet is reached, and the mighty mass of Taku glacier dominates the landscape with its majestic wall of glittering ice.

Much has been said and written of the famous Muir Glacier in Glacier Bay, but the Taku Glacier is in every way larger and more active. It is constantly carving off huge masses of ice, and the tremendous surges thrown up as the bergs take the water make the vicinity of the glacier very dangerous for small craft. Immense quantities of floating ice block the upper end of the inlet in the neighbourhood of the glacier, and the crunching and grinding of the cakes as they are moved by the surges is appalling.

We were fortunate in having a beautifully clear, quiet day for our visit to the glacier, but near approach to it was inhibited by the great extent of the floes. We made one or two

attempts to ram in sufficiently to get some details of ice formation into our photographs, but each time we were driven back by surges that nearly overwhelmed us. Some plates that we exposed later, however, developed very satisfactorily, though owing to the great distance from the glacier that essential feature was dwarfed into insignificance.

Retracing our course to the mouth of the inlet, and there turning northward up the beautiful Gastineau Channel, we came presently to Juneau, the largest, most prosperous, and wettest town in Alaska. As frontier towns go, it is above the average. Its location, at the foot of the precipitous Juneau Peak, is charming. The population, by the latest unofficial census, is given as three thousand men, women and children, and six thousand canines; certainly the dogs are much in excess of the humans. This, however, may be due to the faculty possessed by the Indian dog of being in four or five places simultaneously. Ubiquity of individual life upon this planet has been denied and ridiculed by scientists, but scientists have never considered the psychology of the Juneau dog, which has as many



A PART OF THE CITY OF JUNEAU.



INDIAN TOWN, JUNEAU

lives as a cat, and lives them wholesale, in different spheres of action.

Wherever you go in Juneau, or, for the matter of that, in any Alaskan village, you are annoyed by the multitude of mongrel curs that yelp at you and obstruct your passage. If you swear at them in good (not in the moral sense) English they merely proceed to yet more offensive familiarities. But if you say "Chook," your tormentors instantly put tail 'twixt legs and are meek and lowly. "Chook," in the Indian tongue, means "get out," and an Indian never says "Chook" to his dog without giving a kick by way of punctuation. This has imbued the Indian dog with a great respect for the word "chook," and every one planning a trip to Alaska would do well to lay in a supply of heavy boots and cultivate ferocity in "chooking."

"A-ku" (pronounced "arkoo"), on the other hand, means "come here." With these two words at command one can pass through an Alaskan village with all the facility that the talismanic word *combien* is said to give the travelling Englishman in France.

That part of Juneau known as Indian Town is not a picturesque section. It

is not clean, either. One's first impression is that if cleanliness is next to godliness, godliness is still a long way off from here. The streets are, so to say, panoramic displays of stinks. The dwellings are desolate looking. "House," in its application to Indian life, signifies a feeble and inadequate effort to restrain a majestic and expansive stench; and though I have visited many Indian villages, I have never been able to determine whether their stagnation is a consequence of filth or filth the result of stagnation, or whether both are not the inevitable concomitants of the noble red man.

While we were criticising the atrocities of Indian Town architecture, condemning its system of street paving, and commenting forcefully on its odours, an incident occurred that reminded us vividly of Awansamog holding his court, where, by his own showing, he used to "whip um plaintiff, whip um 'fendant, and whip um all witnesses."

A couple of little Indian boys had been fighting. Being unable to settle the point in dispute, they took their case to an old squaw who sat braiding a mat on a near-by door-step. Each combatant was supported by several witnesses, and

the old woman, after hearing both sides of the question, calmly and systematically proceeded to club and cuff first the two principals, then the witnesses. It was the most unique administration of justice that we had ever seen or heard of, barring the above-mentioned precedent, and it had much to commend it, inasmuch as in any eventuality of legal technicalities the guilty party was sure of receiving condign punishment.

The chief business of the town is, of course, mining. In the spring, when the tide of miners is setting strongly from Vancouver and Seattle in the south to

Despite the enormous quantity of spirits consumed *per capita*, there is very little inebriety in Juneau. At first, we were inclined to attribute this to the quality of the intoxicants sold, but later we discovered our error. The fact is that the greater proportion of the population is made up of hardened toppers—of men who can drink anywhere from a quart to a barrel of whisky, and still defy the pink and white hippopotamus and the feathered rhinoceros. To such men the danger that lurks in the cup is, in Juneau, reduced to a minimum.

But though there are few drunken



FISH AND BERRIES FOR SALE

Dyea and Skagway in the north, en route to the Klondike, Juneau is very, very lively. During the rest of the year it suffers from reaction. To counteract this depression, an enormous quantity of whisky is consumed by the inhabitants. The old saying, that "all brands of whisky are good—some better than others," does not hold in Juneau, where all whisky is bad, and some villainous. To the tenderfoot a very little of it goes a long way, and he drinks it slowly, as the gods did their nectar, not because it is so good and strong, but because it is so strong and vicious.

serenaders to disturb the tranquillity of the Juneau night, the deficiency is more than supplied by boys who, upon the arrival of every steamer, dash through the town yelling "Steamboat." At midnight, as you lie asleep on your hard hotel bed, you are roused by the sudden focusing under your window of this cry, and by the time you have got your ears open sufficiently to decide whether it is murder or fire, the identity of the sound has been lost, as it were, down the perspective of vanishing shouts.

A great deal of prospecting is still being done in the territory of which

Juneau is the distributing centre. Now and then a good strike is made, and a quartz vein is opened and "boomed" in Eastern markets. Nothing of late years has even approximated the great Treadwill mine, however, which is located on Douglass Island, not far from Juneau, and which operates the largest stamp mill in the world, with an annual output of over one million eight hundred thousand dollars. Four hundred dollars was the price paid for the property by the Treadwill Company, and no doubt the prospector thought himself very fairly dealt with—then.

Just as we were departing from Juneau—shaking its mud from our feet, as it were—an amusing incident occurred. There had been some misunderstanding among us as to who should settle our hotel bill, with the result that each thought another had paid. Thus it happened that we went down to embark in our launch bliss-

fully unconscious of the fact that debt and a large Newfoundland dog were in the rear. When we were fairly in the launch, however, the dog began to howl. So did our debt, represented by the hotel proprietor.

"Hi, you!" the latter yelled in tones that made the mountains tremble—"hi, you, come back; you hain't paid your bill!"

Needless to say, we returned.

We were received in impressive silence by the hotel man. We endeavoured to explain. No go! The man pocketed our money and watched us depart, fully convinced that we were a set of "dead-beats." Likewise the dog. He waited until the bill was paid, then went away somewhere with a profound air. Even a dog, by living too much in a hotel, can get imbued with a feeling of distrust of human nature and come to believe in nothing, like an Agnostic.



*A SONG IN MIDSUMMER*

SWEETHEART—Sweetheart—here are summer ways for us,  
Hill and lane and purple plain, riverside and shore.  
Sweetheart—Sweetheart—here are summer days for us,  
Hours to reap and hours to keep in mind for evermore.

Though I heard the prophet bird calling ere the June came,  
Two words—cuckoo words—pleasure linked with pain,  
Could I tell that all was well ere your voice's tune came?  
Could the summer's beauty come till *you* came again?

Sweetheart—Sweetheart—did we ever care before,  
Though we sighed when summer died in a younger year?  
Sweetheart—Sweetheart—did we ever share before  
Such delights of days and nights, such as meet us here?

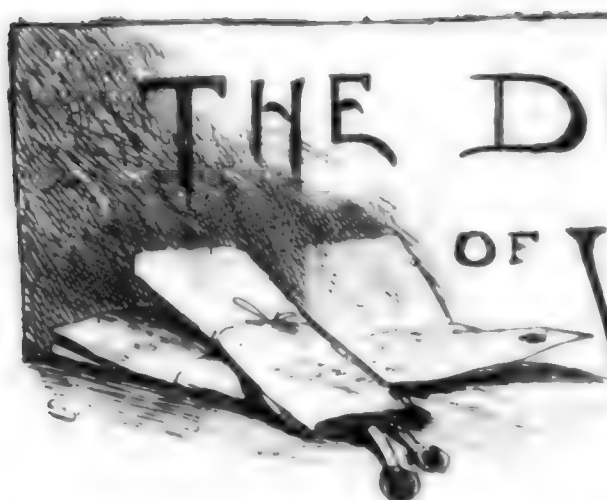
All the hills and all the rills knew us well as lovers :  
Lane and lea and sand and sea surely learned your name.  
Heav'n was here, we said, last year . . . and now a glance discovers  
Many a prize that 'scaped our eyes, blind at love's first flame.

Sweetheart—Sweetheart—when our summer ways are past,  
May we sing at harvesting, ere we wander Home.  
Sweetheart—Sweetheart—when our summer days are past,  
May our eyes still find a prize, even in the Gloam.

J. J. BELL.



# THE DUPING OF VARRON



WRITTEN BY EDWARD TEBBUTT.

ILLUSTRATED BY A. WALLIS MILLS

**M**ONSIEUR VARRON sat in his usual negligent attitude and stared gloomily over the great Paris that lay thronged and busy beneath him. Although long past mid-day he had only just left his bed—but what would you? A man must rest, and if he works by night then, surely, he may sleep by day. For the occupation of Monsieur Varron was one which usually extended from dusk to daybreak, a mysterious occupation, and somewhat indefinable. He lodged in the Rue St. Hevier, and if you know Paris at all you cannot fail to remember this street. It glides unobtrusively from two great thoroughfares; the houses, sub-let into offices and lodgings, are tall, meagre-looking, and oppressively quiet. This probably accounts for the slightness of the *pension-rentes*. Your true Parisian is no lover of such gloomy monotony. M. Varron was not devoted to it himself, but the consequent economy appealed to his somewhat uncertain exchequer, which prevented anything in the shape of reckless outlay.

He was a strange man, this Varron, and one of the few who did not carry

his nationality in his features. When you addressed him, you had a vague, uncertain feeling that “Herr” Varron, or “Mr.” Varron would be just as appropriate as the conventional “Monsieur.” Yet he spoke perfect Parisian French, and his shrug was a poem in itself. To his *hôtesse* he was mystery personified. He always paid his bill with unerring regularity, and never quarrelled with the details—in the Rue St. Hevier somewhat unusual occurrences, and ones which rendered him liable to imposition. Then, too, he seemed to have a decided objection to showing himself in daylight, lolling, instead, in his one small room, sipping absinthe and inhaling innumerable cigarettes. But when the sun set, and man returned from his labour, Monsieur Varron, attired *à la mode*, stole forth from his lair like the son of the night that he was, and penetrated into quarters where his fame had been long established. And respected? you ask. Well, we find various degrees of respect, extended for various reasons, and there are few of us who have not a sufficiency—or an insufficiency—of virtue to lay claim to some portion—of some kind.

On this particular morning, Varron appeared strangely perturbed. The fact was not intensely visible, for he was a man who kept his emotions completely under control. He simply seemed a little more gloomy than usual, a little more morose, that was all. But as the day advanced he grew impatient, and drummed the window-ledge with his fingers, a frown meantime cutting deeper and deeper into his forehead. Whatever the nature of his meditations, however, they were suddenly interrupted by a sharp knock at the door. He sprang to his feet with the air of a man at bay.

"Come in," he cried, with a hasty glance round the room.

Although his appearance was nothing out of the common, the man who responded to his invitation seemed to infuse an air of breeding and quality into the tiny room quite foreign to its usual state. He bowed with courtly ease, and his comprehensive glance embraced the chamber and its occupant at a sweep.

"Monsieur Varron?" he enquired in low, suave tones.

"At your service," replied Varron, with a replica of the other's salute.

"Ha!" exclaimed the stranger, seat-



"HE SPRANG TO HIS FEET"

ing himself uninvited on the edge of the bed. "Although I have never had the pleasure of meeting you, I have heard of you on several occasions."

"I am honoured," replied Varron, "to think that my poor fame should have drifted to such distinguished ears."

"You speak truly when you mention your 'poor' fame," remarked the other negligently; "but the word I should substitute would classify it even more definitely."

As he spoke, he closed the door with his riding-whip, and flicked a speck of dust from his highly-polished boots.

"Perhaps," said Varron, "in place of these veiled insults, Monsieur will favour me with his name and business."

"Claude de Trecci is my name."

"And your errand?"

De Trecci glanced round the bare walls again.

"You have a quiet room here," he remarked.

"And on that account well suited to its occupant. Your errand, Monsieur. You seem to forget that you are an intruder on my privacy."

"If I am rightly informed, M. Varron," said De Trecci, "you endeavour to supplement your income by a nightly attendance at the gaming-tables, and being the enviable possessor of a few tricks of—sleight-of-hand, shall we say?—your invariable success has made you somewhat unpopular. Only last night, for instance, you were ejected from the Thermopolic Club. After that, I should imagine you will find it somewhat difficult to continue your career in Paris, eh?"

"Paris is not the only city in the world," replied Varron sullenly.

"In some respects it is," smiled the other. "It is almost unique, I should say, in the number of scoundrels it supports, in the human birds of prey who feed on its rotting bones, the rich gulls only waiting to be fleeced."

"Monsieur makes his love of Paris so obvious."

"Have a care, Varron," warned De Trecci sternly.

"Monsieur comes uninvited to my room; he insults me, and offers me a false name. I must ask Monsieur le Duc to retire."

"Then you know me?" cried the other eagerly.

"I have that—honour," sneered Varron, "and your presence here tells its own tale. You have discreditable work on hand, and are afraid of soiling your own fingers. You hear that Varron is ruined and disgraced, so you come to him to act as your scapegoat. Monsieur, you have mistaken your man. I am, I trust, still a gentleman."

"Still, the price would be high, very high, and, as you say, there are other cities in the world."

Varron rolled a cigarette with the aptitude of an expert, but made no reply.

"I have heard," continued De Trecci, "that in Vienna there is excellent scope for card-players of—ability. Or, if you prefer to stay in Paris, it is a very easy matter to change one's name. It is absurd to be handicapped by a mere name."

"Monsieur can never reproach himself with neglect of that maxim."

De Trecci lifted his eyebrows in scorn, and rose languidly from his seat.

"Adieu, Monsieur Varron," he said; "my compliments to the gendarmes."

"One moment," exclaimed Varron quickly; "perhaps matters might be facilitated if you confided to me the nature of your employment."

"That remark proves that my estimate was no false one," said De Trecci, smiling; "I judged you as a man of the world, a man not likely to be hindered by any false sentiment—in short, a Frenchman."

"We are both of us—Frenchmen," returned Varron coolly.

"And as such, you will readily fall in with what I have to propose. My errand, though slight in itself, will be of inestimable value to our country, and to mention that a spice of risk is included is, perhaps, only to add to the recommendation. And then the reward. It is so colossal, that it would naturally appeal to anyone."

"My only doubt," said Varron, "is the fact that Monsieur entrusts this paragon to a total stranger, and does not reap so rich a crop himself."

"I am placed in rather a peculiar position," said De Trecci slowly, "and am prevented by force of circumstances

from so doing. In consequence I am bound to seek an accomplice, and one, moreover, whose doubtful reputation would prevent his word weighing against mine in the event of after-questioning. I hope I make myself quite clear."

"Monsieur's chief failing is that he is so explicit."

"Then I take it that you are willing to assist me."

"You may take it—that I am willing to listen to your proposal."

"But what guarantee have I that you will keep faith with me?"

Varron replied with his usual shrug, and ostentatiously wasted a match on his cigarette.

"With his intimate knowledge of my character, Monsieur can hardly suspect me of double-dealing. If the proposal is feasible, and sounds fairly genuine, I will assist you to the best of my ability. If not—" the remainder of the sentence was confided to his shirt-front.

De Trecci slapped his knee, but without enthusiasm.

"Monsieur Varron," he cried, "I trust you. I place myself entirely in your hands."

Varron bowed. The extent of such liability was not likely to be overwhelming.

"To commence with," said De Trecci. "I must allude to a secret party which has recently sprung up in this city with the object of overthrowing the Government, and restoring the Bourbon claimant to the throne of France. With the inner workings of this plot I do not propose to deal, nor to mention the conspirators beyond saying that they consist of the very highest and noblest in the land—men *and* women. In furtherance of their schemes, some wild plan of Prussian assistance has been formulated, and detailed drafts of the frontier forts, their defences and garrisons, have been prepared, with the view of submitting them to the German authorities and appealing for help. To-morrow evening, a lady will leave Paris for Versailles, carrying these drafts with her, intending to hand them to a high Prussian official. That lady must be stopped, and the plans secured at all costs."

"I am but a poor hand at dealing

with ladies," remarked Varron, "but of course Monsieur himself will undertake this perilous part of the business."

"That," returned De Trecci, "is impossible. For I accompany the lady to Versailles."

Varron smiled contemptuously and wreathed a stream to the ceiling.

"Now, I begin to understand," he said. "Monsieur himself, in spite of his scorn of my small misdeeds, is not only a traitor to his country but also to his cause. I congratulate Monsieur. I do not wonder that he is ashamed to make use of the name of his fathers."

De Trecci turned white to the lips, and grasped his riding-whip in menacing fashion; then, with a shrug, he threw it on the bed again.

"'Tis idle to quarrel," he said, "and perhaps my rudeness deserved a rude return. I confess, Monsieur Varron, that I joined this plot with the one end of checkmating the conspirators' designs, and what I had intended to do was to take the first opportunity of seizing the drafts, and of placing them, with the full list of names, before the notice of the Government. Unfortunately, however, an incident has arisen to entirely upset my plans. Mademoiselle de Beaufoy, the lady who carries the drafts, is my affianced wife, and if I follow my original design, the inevitable end must be her ruin and our separation. So, to avoid either, I pretend compliance and leave the matter in your hands."

"Then I am to understand that my mission is to stop the coach and secure your papers."

"Precisely."

"But this reward of which you spoke?"

"The moment you have obtained the papers you will speed to my house in the Rue Cahors, where a special friend of mine will await you. He will take the papers from you, and will deliver, in return, the sum of 50,000 francs."

"Monsieur," said Varron. "So far your story has sounded fairly plausible, but that last clause is suspicious, to say the least of it. How do I know that this money will be paid to me? It would be very easy work, when once inside your house, for the papers to be abstracted and the reward refused. And

this friend of yours. Why does he not enact the rôle you offer me?"

"Because it is essential that he shall not be aware of Mademoiselle de Beaufoy's participation. Indeed, of the nature of the papers he knows nothing. He will merely be instructed to hand you the sum I mentioned in exchange for a certain packet—he is but an accessory to my scheme, in the same manner that you are. And with regard to payment you need have no fear. I pledge you my word of honour that you shall be paid in full."

"I would sooner you pledged me the ring you wear," said Varron, calmly. "However, I will trust you as far as you are trusting me, and hope that I shall no more be betrayed than I betray you. Your coach leaves Paris at——."

"Nine o'clock."

"Then, Monsieur De Trecci," said Varron, opening the door and bowing low. "Until to-morrow night I have the honour of wishing you adieu."

Left to himself, Varron burst into hoarse laughter, the nearest approach to mirth in which he ever indulged.

"The fool," he cried, "to think that I would sell him back his papers for the paltry sum of 50,000 francs. No, my friend De Trecci, as you call yourself. Whilst your accomplice waits me at the Rue Cahors, I shall be speeding over the frontier to Berlin. For even if your drafts are only rough they will make up my half-completed set. And then—God and the Fatherland, for the Prussian eagle shall fly over this cursed city."

The task for which Varron prepared himself on the following night was as foreign to his nature as gentleness to Cromwell's Ironsides. The idea of connecting the man, his silk hat and dainty cane, with highway robbery, was absurd, to say the least of it. Yet, as he waited by the roadside for De Trecci's carriage, the tight line of his lips showed plainly that he would see the matter to its very end, be it for his ultimate good or evil. The night was dark and warm, and the lights of Paris reflected a ruddy glow on the blackness above, which circled the heavens in a sea of crimson mist. A faint breeze sighed and whispered among the swaying

poplars, and to Varron, to whom the voice of nature was an unknown tongue, the minutes rolled slowly and tediously along, though each one, as it passed, brought him nearer to his Fatherland, and to the consummation of his wildest desires. At length, however, a coach rolled heavily in his direction, and, brisk upon the instant, he stepped from the grass-edge on to the road beyond.

"Halt!" cried he, as he caught a glimpse of De Trecci's cynical features through the glass of the window. Obedient to his hail, the coachman pulled up his horses with a sudden jerk, and, hat in hand, Varron stepped to the door and flung it open.

"In the name of the Republic," he said lightly.

"What is the meaning of this farce, Monsieur?" demanded De Trecci, turning on his accomplice with well-simulated indignation. But Varron ignored his presence and bowed politely to Mademoiselle de Beaufoy.

"M'selle chooses a late hour for her journey," said he.

"You insolent dog," roared De Trecci, "close that door instantly, or by our Lady——"

"The road to Versailles," continued Varron imperturbably, "is hardly safe for a lady to travel at night—especially unprotected as M'selle appears to be. I trust I may be pardoned if I suggest that the escort of my gendarmes might perhaps be welcome. But unfortunately my gendarmes are returning to Paris?"

"Gendarmes?" repeated Mademoiselle de Beaufoy.

"They are seeking a traitor who carries treasonable papers abroad. Up to the present, however, their search has not been rewarded as its thoroughness deserves."

"Who carries these papers, Monsieur?"

"Unhappily—a lady. Ladies sometimes have strange ideas that politics are worthy of their attention. *Eh bien*, they had much better devote their charms to the pursuit of love, which, if equally dangerous, at least does not end in the guillotine."

De Trecci drummed the cushions





"STUDENTS . . . . SINGING SOME RIBALD SONG"

with his well-gloved fingers, and glanced from the troubled face of his fiancée to the tolerant smile of Varron.

"I congratulate you, Monsieur," he said, "on the gallantry of your capture."

"Gallantry is a virtue with which Monsieur De Trecci is apparently so well acquainted," retorted Varron.

"If I give you the papers," said M'selle de Beaufoy suddenly, "will you

promise me that M'sieur De Trecci may be allowed to depart in safety."

"I will do more than that, I will promise that you shall accompany him."

"Then take them," she cried, almost flinging the packet into his hands. She fell back on the seat with a rush of tears that dimmed the beauty of her eyes, and tenderly De Trecci bent over and drew her lips to his. Without

a word, Varron placed the papers in his pocket, and, closing the door, motioned to the coachman to proceed.

"I am sorry for that woman," he said, as he watched the carriage lamps grow fainter and duller in the distance, "for between the devil as represented by De Trecci, and the deep sea of imperial politics she is likely to come to grief."

Once inside Paris again, Varron returned immediately to his room in the Rue St. Hevier. Here, at least, he was secure from interruption, and taking the packet from his breast, he carefully removed the huge seals and laid the drafts before him on the table. From corner to corner he scanned them, and as he did so the colour crept from his cheeks, and a wild light sprang to his eyes. He took a second set of drafts which appeared to be already in his possession—rough sketches and incomplete—and laid them by De Trecci's elaborate charts, and again he ran his eye over his newly-acquired treasures. With an oath he sprang to his feet, and banged his clenched fist on the papers before him.

"Gott in Himmel!" he cried, "so the man has played me false."

For De Trecci's charts were incorrect in every detail!

With a mad anger in his heart, Varron leaned from the window and stared at the light and the life below, cursing De Trecci with a vigour one would scarcely have expected to find in a nature so self-contained as his. A party of students passed along the narrow street beneath him, singing some ribald song to the tune of the "Marseillaise." "*Vive la France!*" they shouted noisily. "*A bas le monde, mais vive la France!*"

The frown smoothed from Varron's forehead, and he smiled grimly. He took his own set of plans, folding them precisely as De Trecci's were folded. The false set he tore into tiny pieces, and floated them to the street below. Then he went to bed—a noteworthy incident, when one considers the comparative infancy of the night.

\* \* \* \*

His Excellency the Minister of War

was engaged upon affairs of State. All the morning he had been busily occupied in signing his august name to documents of the purport of which he had not the faintest idea, or in according the light of his countenance to measures whose technicality was far too bewildering to grasp. He was just beginning to wonder if the life of a cabinet minister was so infinitely superior to that of a galley-slave, when a secretary handed in a card bearing the simple inscription, "Monsieur Eugén Varron." The Minister—M. Saintaine his name, by the way—had already heard of Varron; in fact, most people had *heard* of him at one time or another, but there the connection usually terminated. His circle of intimates was limited and peculiar, and confined itself to bounds of discretion. For Varron was a far-seeing man, who based his belief in love and friendship on the old story of Samson and Delilah.

"Admit him," said the politician.

Varron's appearance, as he bowed low to Monsieur Saintaine, left nothing whatever to be desired. He might have been an emperor or an aristocrat or even a mere bourgeois. There is no distinguishing mark, nowadays. It is simply the feathers that make the bird—only in some cases the original bristles protrude. Varron's manners, however, were equal to his appearance, and the Minister was somewhat prepossessed.

"You have business with me, Monsieur?" he inquired. "Then I must ask you to be as brief as possible, as I have an almost immediate appointment." His tone implied that it was with a personage of most overwhelming importance; but, as a matter of fact, it was luncheon, which perhaps rendered its urgency all the more pronounced.

"Then to come to the point at once," said Varron. "I have recently had the pleasure of affording some slight assistance to the Government of which Monsieur is so distinguished a member. Quite by accident I heard of a plot which has been formed in Paris to overthrow the Republic, and again build up the foundations of an empire. In their madness, the conspirators evolved the

idea of appealing to Germany for assistance, and, as a kind of inducement, sent some plans of the frontier forts to the Prussian Government."

"That statement is incredible," interrupted the other. "In the first place it would be a matter of almost absolute impossibility to secure such plans."

Varron handed his packet to Monsieur Saintaine.

"But for my lucky intervention," he said, "these papers would now be in the hands of the German War Office."

"You broke the seals, Monsieur?" said Saintaine sharply.

"I had no desire to be the bearer of false news."

The Minister unfolded the papers and laid them one by one on the desk; then struck a small bell by his side.

"Send the *Compte de St. Pierre* to me at once," he said, as a secretary appeared in the doorway.

For a few moments there was dead silence, which was broken at length by the entrance of the *Compte*, a young man with nobility stamped upon every line of feature.

"Do you recognise these," demanded Saintaine, pointing to the drafts. The *Compte de St. Pierre* leaned over the desk, and scanned them, one by one.

"*Mon Dieu!*" he gasped, with trembling lip. "They are the plans of the frontier forts."

"And correct?"

"In every detail."

"You may retire to the next room, Monsieur le *Compte*," said Saintaine kindly. "But you had better remain near, as I shall require your services later on. And now Monsieur Varron, the question is, how and from whom did you obtain these drafts?"

"I learned last night that they were to be conveyed by road to Versailles, so stopped the coach and secured the papers."

"But who carried them?"

"Le Duc de Guesclin."

"Le Duc de Guesclin?" repeated Saintaine, incredulously. "Have a care whom you accuse, monsieur. I can hardly imagine him to be a dangerous conspirator such as you describe."

"If he denies it I am willing to withdraw the accusation."

As he spoke, the door was flung open, and De Trecci rushed into the room.

"Your appearance, my lord Duke de Guesclin," said Saintaine, coldly, "is most singularly opportune."

"Thank heaven I am not too late," cried the Duke. "Monsieur Saintaine, I denounce this man as a German spy, and demand his immediate arrest. I heard that he had the impudence to come here to-day, and hold myself lucky in arriving before he has had time to escape."

"One moment," interrupted Saintaine. "There is a charge to which you, yourself, must answer before your accusations can carry weight. I have before me plans of the frontier forts, which this gentleman declares he seized whilst in your possession, and under circumstances suspicious to a degree. This is a criminal charge, my lord Duke."

"Yet easily explained," replied De Guesclin airily, "We discovered that Varron is a spy in the pay of the Prussian Government, so instituted this farce to provide him with erroneous charts, and at once prove him to be the traitor he undoubtedly is. The plans, Monsieur Saintaine, are false from margin to margin."

"Your Grace," remarked the Minister, "appears to have a ready wit and a most enviable imagination. But in this case they are somewhat hardly used, for your own words are sufficient condemnation. The plans of the frontier forts are correct in every detail."

"I say they are not," shouted de Guesclin. "They are drafts of my own construction, drawn up at the college of St. Cyr. If those you have before you are correct, then they have been substituted for mine, and that fact alone proves Varron's guilt. I demand——"

"My lord Duke," interrupted Saintaine sternly. "You overstep the bounds of propriety. Your thanks, together with the thanks of all Frenchmen, are due to Monsieur Varron for preventing what could only have ended in a scandal and an international com-

plication. Of M. Varron's conduct I cannot speak in terms too high, and he may rest assured that his loyalty will penetrate to the very highest quarters of the land. But for you—you have disgraced your name and lineage, and if you are not clear of French soil within twenty-four hours, I shall deem it my duty to place the whole affair in the hands of Monsieur le President. You can go."

"But this is——"

"I repeat, you can go."

With a laugh and a sneer, the Duc de Guesclin stepped to the door and flung it open.

"Au revoir, Monsieur Varron," he said. "We shall meet again before long."

"That is for your Grace to decide," replied Varron gravely. "It is a matter of perfect indifference to me."





THE REV. JOSEPH BROWNE, S.J., RECTOR OF STONYHURST

*From Photo by MEDRINGTON'S, LIMITED, Liverpool*

## *A Jesuit College in England*

WRITTEN BY SCOTT DAMANT. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS

"The Church of Rome I found full well  
Would suit my constitution,  
And had become a Jesuit  
But for the Revolution."

*The Vicar of Bray.*

**H**E was so versatile, the clerical hero of that famous eighteenth century ballad, that it is possible he might have found the Church of Rome suited his constitution, although the proposition is at least doubtful. One thing, however, is practically certain; he would never have become a Jesuit. That fact was borne forcibly upon the

writer when, on a visit to Stonyhurst, he ascertained that in the ordinary course it requires no less than seventeen years' study to become a "professed" Jesuit. Seventeen years is a large slice off a man's life. It gives him plenty of time to test his vocation; to contemplate the solemnity of the vows he is about to take. But the severity of this lengthy novitiate, if sometimes irksome



to the individual member, has had one manifest advantage to the society itself. Obviously if a man does not know his own mind after seventeen years' study he can have very little mind to know. As a result, although they are popularly credited with being somewhat terrible personages, and the very word "Jesuitical" has obtained a second and sinister meaning, the Jesuits have at all events always escaped the charge of being fools. It would be strange if it were otherwise, considering their years of compulsory study and the consequent eminence attained by members of the society in all branches of learning throughout the world.

Not only do the Jesuits take high rank as students and scholars; their credit as teachers is also unsurpassed, and few, if any, of their numerous educational establishments scattered all over the globe enjoy a higher reputation than their foremost English College, Stonyhurst.

When St. Ignatius founded his Order he prayed that it might never lack tribulation. That prayer has been signally answered; it never has; and, like that of the Order to which it belongs, the history of Stonyhurst College has been a chequered one. Stonyhurst is the lineal descendant of the college founded in 1592, by Father Robert Persons, S. J., at St. Omers, in Artois. The penal laws against Catholics were then being rigorously enforced in England, and the infant college met with unrelenting persecution at the hands of Queen Elizabeth. Spies were sent over, and when possible students were seized on their journeys to or from the college. King Philip II. of Spain, under whose dominion the province of Artois then was, gave the college powerful aid, but this did not prevent its being looked upon somewhat askance by the inhabitants of the vicinity, owing to its essentially English character.

The first student at St. Omers was Thomas Garnet. He, in due course, became a priest, and proceeding to England on mission work, eventually fell into the hands of the British Government, and was hanged at Tyburn in 1608. Altogether, between the years 1608 and 1681 eleven students of St.

Omers were hanged at Tyburn, one at Lancaster, one at Cardiff, one was killed by "pursuivants," and seven died of hardships endured in various English prisons. That is no mean roll of martyrs.

It has been well said that it is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous. If those good men were murdered for their faith, it was a student of St. Omers who murdered the greatest of Englishmen. He was a Frenchman by birth, and he gave to the world the first translation of Shakespeare into French, wherein he rendered the passage "Love's last shift," "*la dernière chemise de l'amour*." He was not hanged; not even imprisoned. As far as records to the contrary go, he would appear to have been allowed to die peacefully in his bed.

While enduring persecution at the hands of their own countrymen, the collegians were not infrequently brought to book by the rulers of the land of their exile on account of their English nationality and sympathies. Thus in the days of Louis XIV., when Artois had passed under the dominion of France, some of the students threw up their caps and cheered on learning of an English victory over the French. This showed that in spite of their exile they loved their native land, but it was hardly calculated to please their French hosts. Twice the college was destroyed by fire, in 1684 and in 1725 respectively. Wars were common in the country, and their effects were frequently felt. Still, in spite of many mishaps, the college continued at St. Omers until 1762, when the Parliament of Paris declared war against the Jesuits, and included the English colony of St. Omers in its scheme of destruction. News to this effect having been privately conveyed to St. Omers, the Fathers promptly but secretly transplanted their entire establishment to Bruges, which was in that part of the Netherlands then belonging to Austria.

Temporary accommodation of a very primitive character was procured in an old house. Then a large building, known as the house of the seven towers, was purchased and fitted up as an educational establishment, and there the college remained eleven years.

If the tribulations of the followers of St. Ignatius had already been many, the crowning blow came on the 16th August, 1723, when, yielding to strong political pressure, Pope Clement XIV. issued a Brief, formally suppressing the Society of Jesus, releasing its members from their vows, sequestering its property, and directing the various States of Christendom to see to the execution of what had been thus decreed. This decree the Austrian Government put into execution in a particularly high-handed manner.

The Jesuit Fathers were seized and cast into prison, and then a totally unexpected element discovered itself in the business. The boys rose in absolute rebellion. They claimed that their parents had committed them to the charge of certain persons, and no others would they recognise. In vain were soldiers called in; some of the boys escaped through windows and over walls; others, unable to get away, vented their indignation by wrecking

tables, desks, windows, and all else they could lay hands on. As a last resource the Rector and First Prefect were taken from prison and brought back to the college, whereupon order was at once restored. But when on the following day certain English Dominicans were, much against their own desire, inducted as masters, the disturbances broke out with renewed vigour. The Dominicans threw up their posts, members of a community who were versed in the supervision of madhouses were introduced, and soldiers were actually quartered in the college. All to no purpose. The scholars refused all terms, parents began to arrive from England to take away their sons, and the civil authorities closed the school.

Then assistance came in quite an unexpected way. In the neighbouring city of Liege there had been ever since 1616 an English Jesuit seminary for the training of the scholastics of the Society in theology and philosophy. The Papal Decree had been put in force at Liege



WEST FRONT (1592) AND COLLEGE CHURCH (1835) STONYHURST

as elsewhere, but its effects had been reduced to a minimum. Liege was ruled by a Prince Bishop who had allowed the English community to remain, not of course as Jesuits, but as ordinary secular clergy. The President of the college, Father John Howard, on learning that the college at Bruges had been closed, invited the Fathers and students to take up their abode at Liege, and the offer was gratefully accepted.

The stay at Liege was uneventful until 1794, when, after several preliminary alarms, the French Revolutionary forces marched on Liege, and once more the collegians had to look out for a new home. After more than two centuries of exile, they turned their eyes towards England. They were able to do this, for matters had at length improved with their co-religionists in their native land. In 1778 the British Parliament had passed an Act repealing the Statute whereby a priest convicted of saying Mass was liable to be hanged or imprisoned for life at the option of the judge, and, in 1791 a further Act had been passed permitting the existence of Roman Catholic schools in England.

A ship was hired and the entire staff of masters and the dozen boys who had not gone home—known afterwards as the "Twelve Apostles"—embarked for England, where they landed at Hull. Thence by barge they journeyed to Selby, from Selby they proceeded to Leeds, and then on by canal boat to Skipton, from which town they tramped a distance of twenty-three miles to their final destination, Stonyhurst, in Lancashire, where an old Elizabethan mansion had been generously placed at their disposal by its owner, Mr. Thomas Weld. The village near Stonyhurst had always remained faithful to the older religion, and the old hall had been the property of the well-known Catholic family of Shireburn until it passed into the hands of the Welds by the marriage of William Weld, great-grandfather of Thomas Weld, with Elizabeth, heiress to Sir Nicholas Shireburn. Thomas Weld had been educated at Liege, and in this very practical manner he showed his gratitude to his old masters.

The quaint semi-clerical garb of the

students gave rise to considerable commotion on their journey from Hull to Lancashire, and caused them to be taken for foreigners. As a matter of fact the servants accompanying the returned exiles were mostly Walloons, and a good many of the students were French, whose Royalist fathers had sent them to Liege in order to secure a religious education denied them by the Republican Government then existing in France. Now, in the year 1794 it was a very dangerous thing to be suspected of French nationality in England, and, by the irony of fate, the collegians, who, when abroad were looked upon with doubt because they were English, were, when they returned to England, subject for several years to much petty persecution on the alleged grounds that they were French. The trials of Stonyhurst, although irritating at the time, were minor ones, and the college has passed triumphantly through them all. She saw in 1814 the Society of Jesus solemnly restored throughout the world by Pope Pius VII.; she saw in 1829 the Catholic Emancipation Act passed; she saw in 1850 the Hierarchy restored in England; and finally, five years ago, she celebrated her centenary.

The old mansion of Stonyhurst was but ill adapted for a college, but it has been gradually added to and improved upon until the present stately and imposing block of buildings has resulted. The scenery around the college is singularly beautiful and well wooded, it is, however, a mercy that there is much old timber remaining in the college grounds, for Father Wright, the first Procurator, was a terrible Philistine. To mend the rotten timbers and gaping roofs of the house he ruthlessly felled old trees, and even melted down the greater part of the leaden statues which adorned the place. When expostulated with his reply was characteristic, "Stuff and nonsense—I want the money." Fortunately later generations have more than atoned for the good father's vandalism.

The present west front of the college is, as far as the central tower and right wing are concerned, part of the original mansion built by Sir Richard Shireburn in 1592. The cupolas date from 1700,

and were added by Sir Nicholas Shireburn. The left wing was built by the present occupants of the college in 1842, and the infirmary, which stands to the extreme left and is connected with the left wing by a corridor, was erected the following year.

The new, or south front, which was commenced in 1876 and completed in 1888, is 560 feet long and 55 feet high. The west wing is occupied by the community only, the rest being almost entirely devoted to the boys. The basement of the east wing includes music

But much as cleanliness is encouraged and insisted upon, the religious element prevails throughout Stonyhurst, as is right and proper considering the college is conducted by a religious community. Beautiful statues of saints abound on all sides, and besides the handsome church, connected with the college by a corridor, there are three other distinct chapels. The church serves the villagers every Sunday, and on Feast-days the community and scholars worship there, also when the church, although it has accommodation for nearly 900, is



THE NEW OR SOUTH FRONT (1876-1888)

and drawing rooms and gymnasium. In the music room each piano is enclosed in a wooden cubicle, a very necessary arrangement when some half-dozen lads are practising together. There are also, on the ground floor, two reading rooms, two lecture theatres, three playrooms, a chemical laboratory, a most tempting-looking swimming bath measuring sixty feet by twenty-six feet, a covered-in playground for wet weather, known as the Ambulacrum, and in exemplification of the adage that "cleanliness is next to godliness," a "washing place," with tiled floor and marble walls, containing no less than 236 basins and lockers.

practically filled. It was built in 1835, and is most beautifully decorated, as, indeed, are the three chapels which are used respectively by the boys of the Lower Line, the boys of the Higher Line, and those boys of the Higher Line who are members of the "Sodality of Our Lady," this latter being known as the Sodality Chapel.

On the first floor is the Boys' Refectory, once the ancient dining hall of the Shireburns. There, strangely enough, in a Catholic college, or so, it seems at first sight, is a portrait of Oliver Cromwell; but there is a still more interesting memento of the "Lord Protector" on view, for at one end of the



Refectory, under the ancient Minstrel Gallery is the veritable oak table upon which he slept whilst proceeding against the Scotch Royalist Army in August, 1648. In dread of assassination, and not daring to trust himself in a strange bed, Cromwell had this table drawn into the middle of the room. With his sword and pistols by him, and soldiers guarding the door, on this very uncomfortable impromptu bed, the future regicide slept.

Another very important room on the first floor is known as the Academy Room. This contains a most magnificent painting by Rubens, "The Four Doctors of the Church," portraits of King James II. and his first wife, Anne Hyde, and a series of paintings interesting alike from an historical and a sentimental point of view, for they were the property of the last of the Stuarts, Prince Henry Benedict, Cardinal York, known to the Legitimists as King Henry IX. They comprise a portrait of Mary of Modena, the second wife of James II., two adult and one juvenile portrait of James III., two portraits of Prince Charles Edward, a portrait of a daughter of James III., and another portrait of a lady unknown. These pictures are only a few of the many by Rubens and other masters which abound in the college. On stated occasions the Academy Room is turned into an amateur theatre, and a very serviceable stage is fitted up at one end. Devotion to the drama has always been a feature of the life at Stonyhurst, as, indeed, it was in the earlier days over the sea. Tragedies, comedies, operas, and farces have all been essayed, but in no case are female characters impersonated, all such being "masculinised" or eliminated. This needs a certain amount of ingenuity. *Macbeth* with Lady Macbeth transformed into a brother of Macbeth, and *King Lear*



THE SODALITY CHAPEL

without his daughters seem impossibilities, yet both plays have been frequently so performed at Stonyhurst.

In the spacious dormitories on the second floor there are some 240 beds. Over and above the boys at Stonyhurst proper there are some sixty smaller boys in the preparatory school at Hodder, about a mile from Stonyhurst, and about seventy students for the priesthood in the seminary which, although within the college grounds, is quite separated from it. Another feature in the grounds is the Observatory, founded in 1838, and added to considerably during subsequent years, notably by Father Perry, who died in the service of the Royal Astronomical Society, on the expedition to observe the total solar eclipse of December, 1889.

The course of tuition at Stonyhurst, although similar in some respects to that of the ordinary public school, differs in



certain particulars. In the scholastic nomenclature the difference is most marked. The college is divided primarily into two sections, known respectively as the Lower Line and the Higher Line. The Lower Line is again divided into four classes, called Elements, Figures, Rudiments, and Grammar respectively, the last named being the highest. The Higher Line has only three divisions proper, known as Syntax, Poetry, and Rhetoric, but the most advanced students are called Philosophers. These quaint-sounding names date from the days of exile, and are tenaciously held to as a living link with the past.

It must be borne in mind that until recently students from Stonyhurst, with those from other Catholic schools, were

excluded from the older Universities, so that the educational successes of Stonyhurst were comparatively unknown; but at the London University, to which alone Stonyhurst had access, the Honours Lists bear testimony to the nature of the education given at the College.

But many and signal as have been the scholastic successes obtained by Stonyhurst boys, recreation and amusement are by no means overlooked. Those who fancy that the interior of a Jesuit college is grim and forbidding are quite mistaken. Most excellent billiard tables and bagatelle boards are found in the playrooms, and the playground facing the new front measures 580 feet by 300 feet. Cricket and football find enthusiastic votaries both



THE BOYS' REFECTORY

amongst masters and boys. The Jesuits are sometimes accused of employing a system of *espionage* because a Prefect is always present when the boys are at play. A Prefect, it may be observed, is the name given to certain of the under-masters at Stonyhurst, and not to elder boys, as at some public schools. It is hard to see what valid exception can be taken to the presence of one of the priests during playtime. Certainly the boys themselves show no signs of feeling that they are spied upon or under undue restraint. Another complaint sometimes levelled against the

and difficulties which would never otherwise be felt.

That Stonyhurst boys themselves look back in after life with gratitude to their old masters and affection towards their *Alma Mater* is evidenced by the fact that generation after generation of the same family have, in innumerable instances, been educated there; and the roll of distinguished Stonyhurst men is a lengthy one. Amongst those who have become members of Parliament occur the names of Richard Lalor Shiel, who, later on, when made Master of the Mint, issued the "graceless florin,"



THE HIGHER LINE PLAYROOM

Jesuits, and given prominence to by a recent writer in *The Nineteenth Century*, is that they are "Obscurantists," on the ground that they ignore the "Higher Criticism" when teaching their scholars. There are no more able defenders of their faith than the Jesuits, but, as nineteen out of twenty of the boys passing through their hands will probably never be troubled with the Higher Criticism as long as they live, there is much to be said for the contention that, to deal specifically with the Higher Criticism at Stonyhurst might, in many cases, suggest doubts

whereon the usual *D.G.* and *Fid. Def.* were omitted; Sir Charles Wyse, who was successively a Lord of the Treasury, Under-Secretary to the Indian Board of Control, and Minister at Athens; Richard More O'Ferrall, who became in turn Secretary to the Admiralty, Secretary to the Treasury, and Governor of Malta; the Hon. Charles Langdale; and Philip Howard. To the army Stonyhurst has given Colonel Sir Charles Chichester, afterwards Governor of Trinidad; the seventh Lord Clifford, who fought in the Peninsular War, and his son, Sir Henry Hugh

Clifford, who won his Victoria Cross on the field of Inkerman, together with many others who have borne arms in the service of their country. Of Stonyhurst men in the navy, Admiral Arthur Jerningham is a good example; and amongst lawyers reference should be made to Stephen Woulfe, Chief Baron of the Irish Court of Exchequer, the first Catholic to be raised to the Bench after the Emancipation. Greater Britain has known many Stonyhurst men, witness Miles Gerald Keon, Secretary at Bermuda; Sir Frederick Aloysius Weld, G.C.M.G., Premier of New Zealand, and then successively Governor of West Australia, Tasmania, and Straits Settlements; Sir Thomas Sidgreaves, Chief Justice of the Straits Settlements; and Sir Charles Clifford, the first Speaker of the New Zealand House of Representatives. In the Diplomatic service, apart from Sir Charles Wyse, occurs the name of Sir Henry F. Howard, Minister at Brazil, at Lisbon, and at various German Courts. The Stonyhurst theatricals have prepared several of the boys for the professional stage, as in the case of John and George Vandenhoff, father and son. The college has produced at least one well-known antiquary in the person of the Rev. Dr. George Oliver, and a famous naturalist, Charles Waterton. Many examples of Waterton's skill as a taxidermist are on view in the college museum, where in their own way they vie in interest with the wonderful collection of old missals, old black letter volumes, old vestments, and old plate.

Of living men of mark who were educated at Stonyhurst there are Cardinal Vaughan, Lord Herries, Lord Arundell of Wardour, Lord Clifford, Sir Montagu Gerard, C.B., K.S.I., Admiral Whyte, Captain Kenna, V.C., Lieutenant Costello, V.C., Sir Nicholas O'Connor, Ambassador at Constantinople, Mr. Joseph Walton, Q.C., Mr. Murphy, Q.C., Alfred Austin, the Poet Laureate, Conan Doyle, Bernard Partridge, and Percy Fitzgerald.

The list might be prolonged, but sufficient has been said to refute the oft-repeated assertion that there is some-

thing quite incompatible with the English character in the system pursued by the Jesuits. There is another fact which militates against the truth of the assertion. As is, of course, well known, ever since the days of the Oxford Movement there has been a more or less steady stream of secessions from the Anglican Ministry to that of the Church of Rome. As might be expected, the bulk of the converts become secular priests, but those who become regulars nearly always join either the Benedictines or the Jesuits. The late Father Henry Coleridge, brother of the late Lord Chief Justice, is an example. Fathers Thomas Harper, Albany Christie, George Kingdom, Sylvester Hunter, T. Hathaway, and Joseph Stevenson are other instances. Even now there are a considerable number of Jesuit priests in this country who were once clergymen of the Church of England; take Father Huson, once a Cowley Father, and Fathers Sydney Smith, Edward Purbrick, George Tyrrell, Frederick Jones, R. F. Clarke, John O'Fallon Pope, and Ignatius Grant, as examples. The Scottish Episcopal Church has also contributed its quota, Father Humphrey, for one, having been a clergyman therein once upon a time. Now these have received the ordinary English University education, yet, like our friend the Vicar of Bray, they have found that the Church of Rome suits their constitutions, and, as Jesuits, have risen to positions of responsibility and importance in their Order.

The Jesuits are undoubtedly the best abused body of men in the world, but it is probable that a good deal of the feeling expressed against them is due to misapprehensions as to their aims and ideals. As missionaries and masters, however, the Jesuits gain the respect and admiration of those most opposed to their doctrines. In the former capacity we constantly hear of them giving their lives for their faith in far distant lands, in the latter capacity they gain a wonderful hold over the affections of those committed to their charge, and nowhere is this more noticeable than in the stately and beautiful college of Stonyhurst.

# *The Most Gorgeous Train in the World*

WRITTEN BY ARTHUR GOODRICH. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS

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**H**AD the old Roman writer who wrote, "*Pecuniæ obediunt omnia*" lived in these days, he would have altered his opinion as to all things obeying money.

In a measure, of course, they do. With a goodly supply, most tastes can be gratified. You may dress as you like, eat what you like, and live where you like. But you cannot, at least, as far as railway locomotion is concerned, travel as you like.

Fifty years ago a journey behind the iron horse, having the supreme merit of novelty, was regarded as a pleasant variation from the wearying routine of everyday life; but the railroad has now come to be so closely identified with the daily life of the community that one would have thought that something besides utility would have been apparent in the accommodation provided for travellers. But no!

The pleasant fiction that a railway company knows its own business having sunk its roots deep down in the national mind, the public, in unconscious imitation of captives who grow to love their cells, have got to believe that a railway carriage is a place admirably adapted for remaining several hours in one position, either looking out of window or taking a nap—providing, of course, that the seat occupied is the corner one. Then the Briton's regard for his traps is very great. The lighting may be disgraceful, the heating arrangements clumsy, but as long as the slave of custom is provided with plenty of room in the shape of

racks for the smaller luggage, he will be as miserable as you please during the journey.

Of late, however, there have not been wanting signs that the dark ages of railway travelling are drawing to a close. The dawn of progress and improvement may be deferred a few more years, but not longer. When the night breaks, a railway journey will be regarded as a romance, not a penance, and utility will be impregnated with sentiment.

In the coming century we shall have our railway companies following the lead of America, and boldly announcing that their carriages contain all the comforts of home.

True, we have sleeping berths now, and on some of the lines there are cars where dinner can be obtained—by giving notice beforehand. But the comforts of home! Well, they will come as most improvements do here—when the public is ripe for their reception. But there is no occasion to hurry. The innovating hand of time has already played havoc with so many customs and observances cherished by our forefathers in the early days of the "splendid century" that there will be nothing left for the future to redress if we take any further reforms at a gallop. Besides, John Bull is getting old, which is tantamount to saying he is becoming a trifle conservative, so we shall probably go a little slower in the next century than we have done in this. But should there be a demand for a train with all the comforts of home, then, and not till then, will Colonel Taylor, the



VIEW OF CORRIDOR

INTERIOR BY DAY

INTERIOR VIEW OF SMOKING-ROOM COMPARTMENT

DINING-ROOM SLEEPER

European representative of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, U.S.A., take the people of this country into his confidence. The Colonel admires our institutions, and, as a people, loves us too well to draw any comparison between our mode of railway travelling and that favoured by his countrymen. For this he deserves our thanks, for, were he to devote his great energies to reforming our system of travelling, the perfection which followed would deprive us of one of our dearest privileges. With every line in the country rejoicing in a *train de luxe*, what would

become of the Briton's priceless prerogative of grumbling. Besides, Colonel Taylor knows that the world does not like being lectured into reforms. Does not the history of all great movements show that the inexhaustible capacity of some people for giving advice is only equalled by the invincible determination of others not to accept it. Reformation is an internal process. The seeds of conversion must be sown within. The Pennsylvania Railroad Company are now running on their system the most gorgeous train in the world. It is, in fact, so magnificent,



so luxurious, so unlike anything we have here, that the average Briton, on beholding it for the first time, would gasp and probably murmur, "What eccentric people these Americans are!" Why, certainly; all innovators are eccentric. They would not be innovators if they did not despise existing conditions. But they are none the worse for that; indeed, it is the readiness the Americans display in assimilating new ideas which renders them such delightful companions. Of humdrum people, who think, talk and act as if they were all fashioned in the same mould, we have such an appalling abundance that the innovating American should be welcomed with open arms. So let us learn all about his wonderful train, and pave the way for its introduction by familiarising ourselves with the devices employed to reduce, by convenience, comfort, ease and excellence, the horrors of railway travelling to a minimum. Be prepared, therefore, to learn that we have everything to learn from America in the matter of railway travelling—at all events, where comfort is concerned. Ask any American what he thinks of our railway carriages, and he will tell you that they are on a par with our climate. Last summer I met an American legislator rustivating in the Surrey hills, who delivered himself thus:

"I suppose it is the climate that has developed those qualities which have enabled your people to conquer India and retain it; but even if it is, there is no reason why, because you are a hardy race, you should elect to display those qualities on a railway journey at the expense of your physical comfort."

"You English tell me," says another American I know, "that you must have plenty of exercise, and that bustle is necessary for your health; and yet, so great is the force of habit, that, in a railway carriage, you are content to sit for hours in a long overcoat, with a rug on your knees, thick gloves on your hands, and with an expression of countenance—well, let us describe it as vacant." This may not be flattering, but it is true. But to our muttons. Now, in the Pennsylvania new drawing-

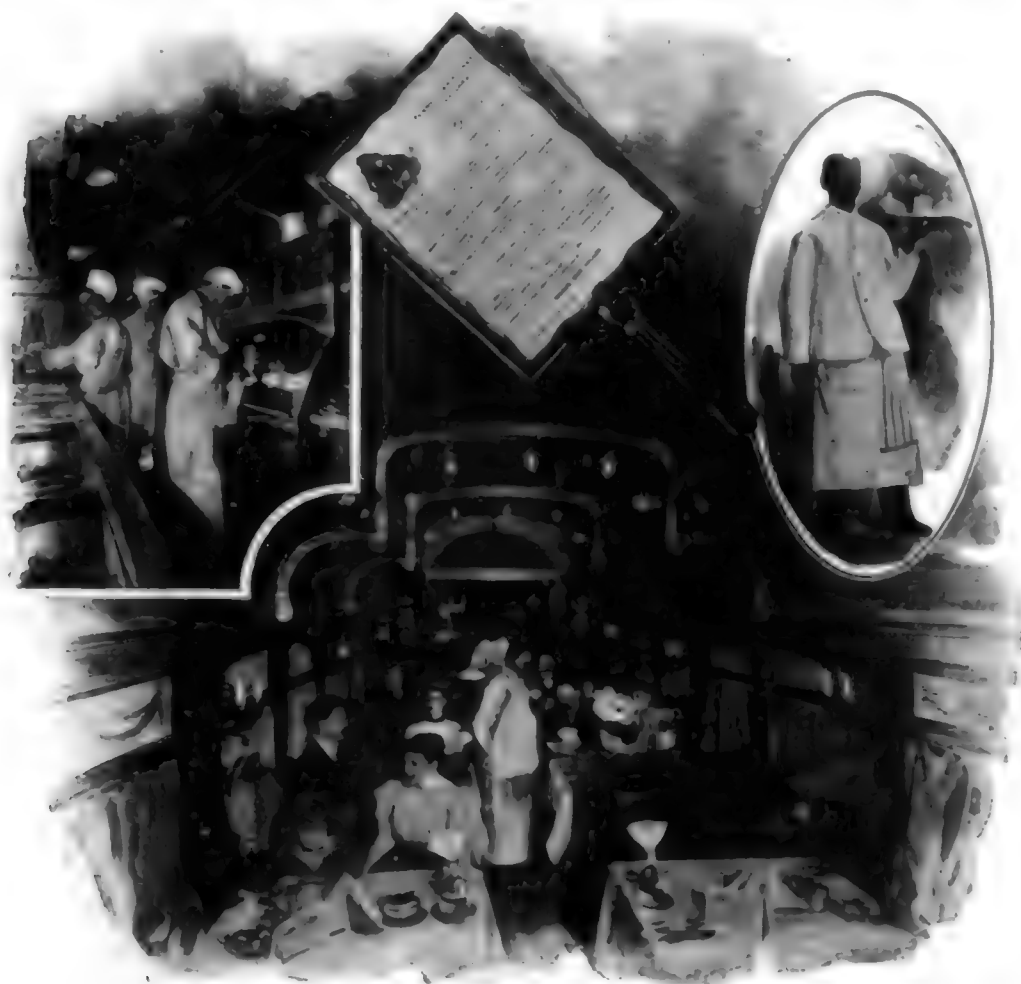
room palace cars a passenger can walk from one room to another just as he would at home. He is in a house, or rather, palace on wheels. He wants to write his letters? Well, he goes into a beautifully appointed study. A drink? There is the bar. Dinner? A perfectly appointed dining room, where all the delicacies of the season can be obtained, cooked by a master hand.

A house, a place of business, a club, a restaurant, a concert room—all in one. You might pass a month on one of the Pennsylvania dining-room cars and never once be attacked by the demon of weariness. It may be urged against all these innovations that people in this country have a great regard for privacy. If it is true what they say of us on the Continent, that we are an overbearing, arrogant, insolent people, surely the best way to treat us is to see that we travel alone. There being no doubt that one of our insular customs is to scowl at the person sitting opposite you in a railway carriage, it must be clear that the surest way of keeping the Briton in good humour is not to disturb his love of privacy. The most discontented man, when alone, is certain of an admiring audience. Mere sophistry, the reader will say. Possibly; but it is because I believe in the American drawing-room palace car that I do not admire our railway carriages. Does any one mean to say that listening to your wife playing the piano, for instance, is not a better way of passing the time than sitting opposite her hour after hour, only breaking the silence by hackneyed remarks on the weather, reading the newspaper and going to sleep?

To those who have grown accustomed to the British railway carriage, cool, neat, and negative, the outward appearance of the Pennsylvania drawing-room palace car train would, for a moment, cause a shock. To describe it as striking would not be sufficient. Carpers might call it gaudy; I prefer calling it novel. The colour of the wheels being red, imparts a cheerfulness so great that, although the cars below the window are painted a bottle-green, the effect aimed at is not destroyed. Some people declare bottle-green to be

a trying colour. It may be, but it is not noticeable in this train, for its oppressiveness is relieved by broad bands of Roman gold, and the use of a delicate cream above the window line, with a Renaissance style of decoration, also in gold. But the exterior, striking as it is, gives but little indication of the magnificence and completeness of the interior. The spectator rubs his eyes and looks round. A railway train?

decorations, the upholstering, are so varied that to do them justice the descriptive powers of even an experienced lady expert would be severely tried. I should like to dismiss this branch of the subject by saying that a great deal of the upholstering is in royal blue plush of the finest quality, and that its tint blends most harmoniously with the highly polished, carved and decorated woods. But I am



DINING CAR.

No. An eastern palace or a spot in fairyland, where the sordid concerns of life find no place. The Pennsylvania *train de luxe* is rather difficult for a male journalist to describe. It is easy to say that the vestibule runs the full length of the train; and that passengers are provided with that desire for locomotion which seems one of the characteristics of this feverish age. But the

called on to describe a *train de luxe*, and as the one I am grappling with has the supreme merit of novelty, details are necessary. One of the most striking features of the train is the "observation" car, situated in the rear of the train. I will say something of this apartment later on, for there is an arrangement at its end which affords me an opportunity I have long sighed for,

of dealing a deadly blow at that hideous monstrosity, the guard's break. There may be a more unsightly vehicle in the world than a guard's break. If there is I shall be glad to know what it is. On this train the Pennsylvania directors have, in lieu of the break, substituted a recessed end, a sort of conservatory, to which the passengers, in fine weather, repair to enjoy a view of the country through which they are passing.

In fine weather the popularity of this platform is shown by the number of camp-stools scattered about. We may not be ripe for a *train de luxe* in this country, but the company which presents us with a conservatory, with an adjoining buffet (not too far away) at the end of the train in place of the break, deserves the thanks of all those who think there is room for improvement in our railways, which is equivalent to saying the gratitude of the entire community. The recessed end in the *train de luxe* is nine feet by eight feet. The railings which run round are composed of highly-ornamented brass; and so that those seated in the rear shall not have their view obstructed by the towering edifices so warmly cherished by American ladies just now, the sides have been made of glass. The observatory takes up half the car, and in keeping with the decoration, the windows are of most ample proportion. Before I plunge

into the unfathomable ocean or up-holstering, just a word on the lighting. In the front end of the baggage car is a fifty-horse dynamo. Colonel Taylor thinks that the wretched lighting of our railway carriages in the past has led the English optic, in its struggle of adaptation to environment, to develop a new sort of sight—a cat-like gaze, able to read a newspaper in a light not much greater than that afforded by a rushlight. When the American *train de luxe* has converted the British director, the problem of near-sighted travellers being able to read on our lines will be solved. In the *train de luxe* there have been two policies at work—one to make it magnificent, the other to make the magnificence enduring. So, in the event of any of the electric lights failing, there are numerous gorgeous chandeliers, burning gas of a high illuminating power, to take its place. Altogether the electric lights number 500, and the gas lights half that number. A most desirable feature of the electric light is to be found in the small globes which are placed in all berths, so that passengers afflicted with insomnia can try and read themselves to sleep.

Water is furnished by air-pressure, the old-style faucets in the toilet-rooms being dispensed with.

Behind the baggage-car is the barber's



ELECTRIC LIGHTING

DYNAMO COMPARTMENT

READING BY ELECTRIC LIGHT



OBSERVATION CAR

SECTION IN SLEEPING CAR

BARBER SHOP

LIBRARY CAR

shop. "A shave on the train!" the reader will incredulously exclaim. "What about the oscillation?" Well, there is none, or what little there is does not prevent the traveller from placing his chin at the disposal of the barber, without fear of being sliced. The barber, I am given to understand, is an artist in his way; but as Pullmans, when building the train, paid especial attention to its balance, those who prefer operating on themselves can do so. The barber's shop contains a perfectly appointed bath-room, and every convenience known to the tonsorial art.

In the car with the barber's shop is the smoking-room, which is so beautifully decorated, carpeted and upholstered, that the visitor might easily fancy himself at his club. The chairs are of wicker, and removable. This car also contains the buffet, and a hand-carved writing desk.

But if the smoking-room is cosy, the dining-car is gorgeous. A truly sumptuous apartment this, furnished in vermilion mahogany. The ceiling is of wood, with a yellow background, decorated with gold. The seats are beautifully carved, and the tables are detachable. The light fixtures are all

wrought, and are of the finest workmanship. The car, too, is plentifully mirrored, even the windows being of plate glass. The sideboard is a miracle of the cabinet-maker's art.

The kitchen, which is modern in every respect, is entered only through a small door. When this is closed no gastronomic odours can penetrate the car's interior. The *chef*, being an artist of European reputation, the cooking is superb. Few people, in this age, at all events, will find fault with this feature of the *train de luxe*; and considering that, to put it mildly, we, as a nation, are disposed to regard dinner as the most pleasant, if not the most important, event of the day, those who regard a well-cooked dinner as the greatest triumph of civilisation, would perhaps be inclined to put up with the guard's break if a good dinner could be had when travelling; and, certainly, when dinner is designed with due regard not only for good cookery but conviviality, the meal secures an increased popularity. Hear Colonel Taylor on this point: "Our train is not only a luxury, but it is a social power. Two old friends meet, who have not seen each other for years. In England they would say 'How are you? Glad you are well,' and part at the journey's end without turning a hair. On our train they say 'Let us dine together.'" This sentence of the Colonel is pregnant with meaning. The dying embers of many an expiring friendship have been kindled anew over a succession of well-cooked courses. Dinner on the Pennsylvania train is, I am told, a sight never to be forgotten, the management of light and heat, the silent and rapid service of the attendants, the smiling guests, the pleasant remarks, the handsome dresses of the ladies, the cunning artifices in fruit and flowers, engenders an intellectual gratification of which the directors should be proud of being the parents. Surly and morose beyond all powers of reclamation must be the misanthrope who can resist the mellowing influence of a good dinner. Dinner over, forty winks for digestion, and then a cigar or a little music. When we have become a little more civilised we shall not only

insist on having a music-room with our *train de luxe* and a first-class grand, but shall expect the company to provide an experienced performer as well. Who is there to-day who does not shudder at the prospect of a journey from London to Edinburgh? But in the music-room the hours would simply fly.

At the back of the dining-room are the sleeping cars, replete with every comfort, costly fittings in mahogany, crystal and gold-plate being everywhere apparent. There is not an hotel that can boast the luxurious appointments of these bedrooms on wheels. The carpets of the finest Wilton, hangings of costly silk, beautiful furniture, heavily framed mirrors, give this part of the *train de luxe* a look of truly oriental magnificence.

The general colour scheme of the bedroom is royal blue picked out with gold-leaf. The mahogany finish of the car walls is thrown at intervals across the dome, which breaks the long expanse of ceiling. The bedroom fittings never fail to impress the male biped, just as the blue tapestry upholstery invariably wins the approval of the ladies.

Although each car contains every convenience of the toilet, the general appearance is not crowded, as all the lavatories are cleverly concealed. In these latter rooms the colour scheme is green and gold, the ground-work of the ceiling being a deep rose tint of uncommon beauty. Reverting one moment to the observatory, the observation car contains six compartments, so arranged that any two or more can be used together. Each of these is adorned with beautiful wood carving, the upholstery being of the most costly description. Each compartment, in addition to all toilet facilities, contains the accessories of a well-fitted sleeping-room; these, however, are so skilfully concealed, that the compartments look like a richly furnished drawing-room.

These different compartments are worthy of further mention. The first is finished in Santiago mahogany, inlaid with pretty blending woods. The colour effect is green.

In the second prime Vera mahogany predominates, the prevailing tone being cream.



The third presents a somewhat lurid appearance, with its vermilion mahogany and green and gold colouring.

In the fourth, as a compliment to the mother country, English oak is used. This wood is of a deep rich reddish

ance. The prevailing colour of this room is blue.

The handsome Circassian walnut is employed, but this has been reserved for the best room on the train.

The ornamentation of the ceilings is



INTERIOR DRAWING-ROOM

SLEEPING CAR

LADIES' MAID

VESTIBULED ENTRANCE

brown, which blends admirably with the upholstery.

The fifth compartment contains the queer Tobasco mahogany, the grain of which, as it runs in all directions, gives the apartment a very striking appear-

ance. They are all beautiful in their way, that of the "observation" car, designed to harmonise with the colouring of the carpet, being very noticeable.

So much for the magnificence. Just

a word on the train in its utility aspect. Those who have letters to answer will find everything they require in the writing-room—desks, paper, pens and ink, not forgetting the indispensable typewriter. The lights form a commendable feature of this room. They can be placed in any position, so as to accommodate all descriptions of sight.

It is now time to pause, for the space at my disposal precludes mention of all the astounding novelties to be found in this *train de luxe*, but the waiting-maid constantly on duty to attend to invalids and children, and the other servants, should not be forgotten. They are treasures in their way. The ingenious arrangements for bulletining reports for the benefit of persons who may desire to trade as they travel also deserves to be chronicled. By this means all the commercial, financial, and general news of the world is presented fresh from the wires as the train rushes along.

Fancy English passengers whilst travelling being placed in communication with the outside world! The brain reels, the heart throbs, at the bare contemplation of such an innovation.

The Pennsylvania *train de luxe* is not only perfect, it is unique. There is nothing to beat it in America, and, needless to say, nothing approaching it in Europe. The company refuse to state its cost, but it must have been tremendous. Whether considered from the utilitarian or the purely artistic standpoint, Pullmans, who built this train, must be held to have excelled themselves.

There may be people who really enjoy a long journey in our own trains, as at present constituted. Personally I have never met any of these folk, but if they exist, they must not only possess quite exceptional powers of endurance, but be imbued with a perfectly fanatical horror of comfort, to say nothing of progress, if they do not reconsider their views on railway travelling after reading this article.

Public opinion in this country is slow to assert itself, but if some of the Pullman drawing-room palace cars could be placed on our lines, the belief entertained by our companies that their antiquated survivals are really up to date would be speedily denounced as one of the most extraordinary superstitions that ever took into captivity the railway mind.



FULL LENGTH VIEW OF THE PENNSYLVANIAN, LIMITED



WRITTEN BY REGINALD BACCHUS AND RANGER GULL

ILLUSTRATED BY V. A. D. LUELLYN

I.  
**T**HE Secretary's morning suit was of a dark grey tweed with a green check in it, and his speech was the speech of Inverness that had been watered down by many years of business employment in town.

His little room was full of the noises of the outside world, but he abated in no degree the speed and regularity of his writing, though at times the rumble of a heavy van would move him to a momentary exasperation. When the noises became unbearable he would grind his heel into the carpet and lick the flap of the envelope that he had just addressed, with a savage sweep of the tongue. These demonstrations of annoyance were infrequent, as he prided himself very much on the repose of his manners, and, moreover, had one morning discovered to his horror that the Turkey carpet, which had been most expensive, was, in the portion that lay beneath his secretaire, becoming extremely threadbare.

As he wrote there was a knock at the door, and one of the male servants of the house entered in a discreet manner.

The Secretary swung himself round in his chair.

"And where," he said, "is Mr. Cormorant's answer to my letter?"

"He desired me to tell you," answered the man, "that when the weariness of the morning had left him he would presently see you, and talk with you in person of the matters dealt with in your note."

"The impudent scoundrel!" began the Secretary, rising from his seat; "I will go to him myself. That will do, Johnson," he continued, and, as soon as he was alone, sat down again. His first impulse had been to immediately seek out Mr. Cormorant, and demand from him an instant consideration of the letter; but on second thoughts he reflected that his sound business arguments would be, without doubt, worsted by the pleasantries of Mr. Cormorant, and that probably many disreputable artistic people would also be present to assist at his discomfiture.

Mr. Philip Mundell, Secretary and part proprietor of Belvedere Mansions, had risen from a very modest beginning to a state of prosperity that almost fulfilled his greatest expectations. After a brief career as office boy to a dishonest and truculent solicitor in Inverness, he had run away to London, where, after

many unpleasant vicissitudes, he had at length become the Secretary of a small City club. The duties of a Secretary suited him, and from that day he had never sought any other class of employment. In the many different clubs that he had managed, he had gained a wide experience of men and manners; and when, at last, his savings amounted to so respectable a total that they enabled him to find a part of the capital, and become Manager and Secretary of the new residential buildings known as Belvedere Mansions, it would have been difficult to find a man more suited to the post.

At first the prospects of the new undertaking confirmed the most extravagant hopes of the directors. The building was conveniently and pleasantly situated, and the comforts of the flats that it contained charmed every prospective tenant. The culinary and domestic arrangements were in every way excellent, and the large staff of servants had been carefully selected by the indefatigable Mr. Mundell himself. Applications for sets of rooms were very numerous, and after a few short

weeks every flat contained its bachelor. Mr. Mundell went very gleefully about his business, and when he chose to visit some of the clubs that he had been connected with in former years, he would often surprise his acquaintances by the cheery liberality with which he invited them to refreshments.

For a time all went well, and Mr. Mundell wrote often to his friends in Dingwall and Inverness, telling them of the little green brougham carriage that he was about to buy, and of the great society that he was privileged, in a sense, to be a member of. The monthly accounts were settled with amazing regularity, and the high scale of charges fixed by the management had elicited a grumble from no single tenant.

It was at the end of the fifth month that the tenant of Flat No. C 3—Mr. Charles Cormorant—requested that he might be allowed to defer the payment of his bill for a few days. He was, he stated in a pleasant note to the Secretary, suffering from a temporary financial embarrassment, consequent on being over-confident in loans to his friends.



"THE TWO MEN WOULD OFTEN SIT TOGETHER IN THE LITTLE OFFICE"

Mr. Cormorant had been one of the earliest tenants of the Mansions, and had indeed been the means of bringing several others to the establishment, so that he was very agreeable to Mr. Mundell; and the two men would often sit together in the little office discussing the rumours of the town, and the truly excellent flavour of the Secretary's whisky. It was, therefore, with a gracious movement of dissent that Mr. Mundell waved aside the proffered post-dated cheque, and assured Mr. Cormorant that the time of payment was his to choose, and that Belvedere Mansions would never be inhospitable to a gentleman of so agreeable a disposition and so rounded an experience.

At the end of the sixth month, however, and also the seventh, the Secretary had failed to discover Mr. Cormorant's cheque among the little pile that lay before him; and when three of the gentlemen whom he had been so proud to welcome as Mr. Cormorant's friends, also prayed that their inability to be prompt in their payments might be for the moment excused, Mr. Mundell was unable to persuade himself that his generosity was altogether well considered.

Nor had other signs been wanting that the conduct of Belvedere Mansions was not as peaceful as of old. Mr. Mundell had been not infrequently disturbed in the early hours of the morning by the riotous departure of belated guests, and not a few of the more sedate inhabitants had lodged complaints about the inconvenience caused to them by the boisterous behaviour of Mr. Cormorant and his friends.

Mr. Cormorant was an artist more decadent in his art than his manners. He painted very delicate designs on many rare and unusual textures, but it was his habit to be frequently intoxicated on the most commonplace of liquors. Of the friends whom he had introduced to the Mansions some were artists, some writers, and some masters of conversation, and they all professed, by their works and by the punctilio of their rooms, to be very refined indeed.

Mr. Mundell would delight, when he visited them in their flats, to see the profusion of exotic flowers, and the

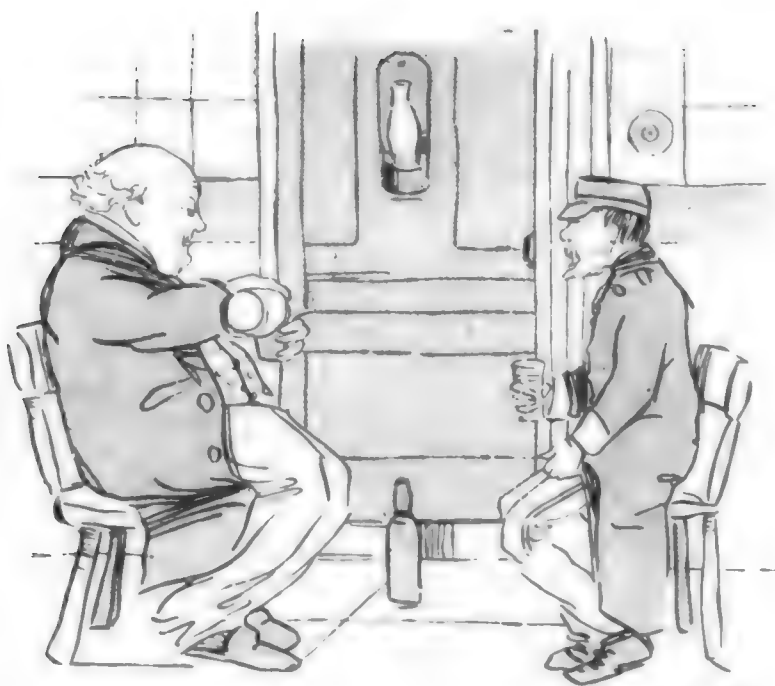
number of bottles of strange drinks that stood upon the sideboard. Their pleasant manners, the delightful way in which they would tell of an *esclandre*, and the pity and contempt that they affected for toilers in the ordinary walks of life, made them in Mr. Mundell's bourgeois mind persons of a world quite apart. Accordingly, when on one occasion the chance opening of a door discovered Mr. Esmè Vaun, the novelist, and Mr. Alfred Leaf, who drew on ivory, drinking bitter beer out of large flagons, and reading the works of an American humourist, he surprised a feeling of astonishment and pain.

It was, however, shortly after the noted author, Mr. Caradoc Milnes, came at Mr. Cormorant's suggestion to live in Belvedere Mansions, that Mr. Mundell became possessed of a real uneasiness. With Mr. Milnes came his father, John Fiddeyment Milnes, or as his familiars lovingly called him, "Uncle Fiddeyment." It was impossible to withstand the influence of the cheery old gentleman, and the young decadents, who had hitherto observed a most decorous conduct, would frequently scandalise the other inhabitants of the Mansions by merrily assisting Uncle Fiddeyment in his most extravagant humours. It had been necessary to discharge the lift porter for drunkenness, since Uncle Fiddeyment, who disliked solitude, but was seldom tidy enough to accompany his son to the elegant parties that he affected, would, when left alone in the evenings, place a chair by the lift, and summoning the porter by the electric bell, regale the honest fellow with jovial tales and strong drink, to the marked displeasure of those waiting below.

The sum of Mr. Mundell's tenants was completed by several Members of Parliament, a considerable number of gentlemen engaged in the production of serious literature, and a few stockbrokers, who were absent every day at the City, and every evening at the "Empire."

These worthy folk frequently suffered rude shocks as they passed to and from their rooms, and the chance encounter with a band of decadents, following Uncle Fiddeyment in a gambol through





"UNCLE FIDDEYMENT WOULD REGALE THE PORTER WITH JOVIAL TALKS AND STRONG DRINK"

the passages, or the eruption of a sudden and dreadful noise from behind a closed door, would send them at once to compose a most indignant letter to the secretary. It was after the discovery of the head waiter and one of the upper housemaids, made up by Mr. Cormorant as Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Eliza Brownrigg, dancing with Uncle Fiddeyment in the dim corridors of the fourth floor, that Mr. Robert Iron, the noted mediævalist, gave up his flat. He left after many bitter remarks as to the correct discipline of a residential hotel, and establishing himself in a suite of underground chambers, beneath the important library of which he was secretary, became presently a convert to socialism.

In this way Mr. Mundell came to be on the horns of a most hazardous dilemma. He stood in danger of losing the serious tenants, who were the staple of his enterprise and he yet conceived a reluctance to employ harshness against those who had made him privy to their society.

As he sat that morning in his little plainly-furnished room, the Secretary was not pleasant to look at. He was a

man of forty or upwards, thin, but very square of shoulder, and his long neck, that came out stiffly from an open collar, carried a face in which the wolf and the fox struggled for mastery. Months of anxiety had chased all kindliness from his mind, and he was now fully determined to be rid of Mr. Cormorant at all hazards. Several of the Members of Parliament had followed Mr. Iron's departure, while Mr. Cormorant grew every month more prodigal in his orders, and more fertile in his excuses for postponing payment. The crisis had been reached the night before, when the Secretary, aroused from his sleep by a great clamour in the artist's flat, had gone himself to insist that it should cease, and entering unannounced, had been seized by a tall powerful man, of a Napoleonic cast of countenance, who rising suddenly out of the smoke, had hurled him incontinently into the corridor.

The memory of his experience lay sore upon the Secretary in the morning, and his note to Mr. Cormorant had demanded an apology, and an instant settlement of accounts. He was by nature little of a coward, but the

prospect of conveying himself a definite order of dismissal to the artist was one over which he found it impossible to be comfortable. A knock at the door interrupted his reflections, and a gentleman, whose voice proclaimed him a German no less loudly than his features a Jew, and whose age may have been twenty-eight, entered in an accustomed manner, and wished Mr. Mundell a good morning.

"You are very happy, Mr. Birnbaum, in your arrival," said the Secretary. "Here is a matter in which I wish your help, and a problem which I promise you we shall not find easy to solve."

Mr. Francis Birnbaum was assistant-secretary of Belvedere Mansions, and though Mr. Mundell, in the first elation of the friendship of his artistic tenants, had affected a considerable condescension in his dealings with the young man, he had of late discovered in him a clever and valuable ally.

"The matter," continued Mr. Mundell, "in which I shall be glad of your aid is one which concerns very nearly the future of Belvedere Mansions. I believe that you are yourself interested to the extent of a few shares in this enterprise, so that you will be the more willing to help one who has the major part of his fortune at stake, in an affair which affects the future welfare of us both."

Mr. Birnbaum bowed his assent, and the Secretary pushed a heap of papers across the table towards him.

"You will see," he continued, "that Mr. Herbert Glass, M.P., Mr. Donckersly, and the Reverend Peter Knollys have to-day given a month's notice, pretending in each instance the same reason, namely that the disturbances created by Mr. Cormorant and his friends have made Belvedere Mansions a place in which a gentleman of reputation can no longer live. You will also note that Mr. Cormorant has now been our debtor for six months, during which period his bills have nearly always been the largest in the establishment. Now the scandal of a public eviction might do infinite damage to the good fame of the Mansions, and such a course of action must be, if possible, avoided. We must therefore endeavour to discover some means of inducing Mr. Cormorant to

leave his flat without having recourse to the majesty of the law."

The secretary paused, and looked enquiringly at his assistant.

Mr. Francis Birnbaum was a pale, undersized little man with an eager and crafty expression. It was his humour to wear a heavy moustache and to belong to a Volunteer corps, and in the bosom of his family at Fulham he affected a flavour of Lord Roberts at home. The tailor, in the City, who made clothes for the little mean man, knowing his type, always sent home parcels addressed, "Captain Birnbaum." Be that as it may, no moustache or single eye-glass could disguise the fact of Mr. Birnbaum's parentage. His soft, yellowish nose and greedy, sensual lips proclaimed him unerringly for what he was, the dirty little continental Jew, of a mixed breed.

He deliberated for a few seconds before he answered.

"You have, I believe, tried the experiment of ordering the servants to refuse him meals and drink?"

"I have," said the Secretary, "but since it has always been his practice to dine from home, and ignore entirely the meal of breakfast, that measure has only affected his friends who occasionally sleep in his flat, and who so find no means of satisfying the morning hunger. As for drinks, the pernicious influence of Mr. Fideyement Milnes has aided him in procuring them from the servants despite my orders. I confess that, at present, I see no way of ridding myself of this troublesome tenant, yet done it must be, or the reputation of Belvedere Mansions will shortly be irretrievably lost."

"I will speak quite frankly," said Mr. Birnbaum, "and avow myself to be in this matter a man of few scruples, for I most cordially detest Mr. Cormorant. I will stick at nothing that will rid us of the fellow, and I think I am right, Mr. Mundell, in supposing that you are not a man to be difficult over trifles in an affair that may save your fortune."

The secretary half-turned his head, and looked fixedly into his companion's face. Mr. Birnbaum bore the scrutiny with composure, and, leaning back in his chair, seemed to invite his superior to

continue. No word was spoken for a few moments, each man trying hard to gauge the intentions of the other. Then the Secretary broke the silence, talking more rapidly, and with a slight uneasiness.

"I am glad," he said, "to find that you share my detestation of the man Cormorant. I will own that I was, at first, won by the superficial charm of his address, but, of late, his apish tricks and unprincipled conduct have filled me with a loathing that will excuse in my own mind any rigour that may be necessary. So far, Mr. Birnbaum, nothing has arisen in my career that has compelled me to be other than a man of peace, but in this case I am ready to adopt any scheme that you, or both of us, may evolve."

The assistant rested his elbows on the table, and as he spoke his eyes were half-closed, and there were wrinkled lines round his mouth.

"I have been, in my time," he said, "connected with the turf, and I have never entirely lost sight of a few friends, whose assistance might be extremely useful in such a case as this. Cormorant is, I believe, inclined to be indiscriminate

in his evening wanderings, and the hint of an unusual adventure would be sufficient to bring him willingly into the society of my friends. It would not be expensive, and should he return, which I doubt, the fact that the management of Belvedere Mansions were the authors of his abduction would never transpire. There would, of course, be no bloodshed."

"I have already canvassed that idea," said the Secretary, after a pause, "and have been compelled to dismiss it, since I feel sure that he would contrive to make his escape, and, on his return, would consider, by reason of his suspicions of our complicity, that he was more than ever entitled to indulge, at our expense, his appetite for drink and fantastic behaviour. Besides, he would so exaggerate and glorify the events of his capture, and the ingenuity of his escape, that his friends would make a hero of him, and, every night, Belvedere Mansions would be full of the disreputables of town, seeking to offer him their drunken congratulations. Should Cormorant, or that dirty old rascal Fiddeyment Milnes, be able to prove our share in the action, they would become such a millstone round our necks as would inevitably



"MURDER," SAID MR. MUNDELL. "OF COURSE I WAS AFRAID IT WOULD HAVE TO COME TO THAT"

sink us to the bottom of an ocean of ruin. No," continued the secretary, wearily, "there must be no question of his re-appearance. I am desperate, and you may suggest what you will."

"I understand you perfectly, Mr. Mundell," said the assistant, "and I am rejoiced at your last words, we can now talk as men whose intentions are one, and I would suggest that my friends are people who would, if necessary, entirely preclude the possibility of any return. It would be more expensive, but much more satisfactory."

"Murder," said Mr. Mundell. "Of course I was afraid it would have to come to that. Well I suppose we must make up our minds to do it, but not with the assistance of your friends, who, worthy gentlemen as they doubtless are, might not be able in a period of financial depression to resist the opportunity for blackmail. I confess that is a contingency that inspires me with the liveliest horror. No, Birnbaum, this thing must be carried out by you and me alone. Let us hatch the plot, I look to you for suggestions."

"I think," said the little Jew, "that though I have no reason to fear an eavesdropper in this room, yet I would rather be sure of the matter. Let us take a stroll to the Park; the business of the streets may lend us ideas."

After a few minutes' absence he came back with his hat and coat, and walked with Mr. Mundell to the lift. The iron railings were open, and the secretary was about to step through the doorway when he saw to his horror that the car was not there, and that a deep black tunnel yawned almost directly underneath his feet. He recovered himself hastily, and slamming the gate pressed the bell button angrily. "Really Mr. Birnbaum," he said, "your new porter is most careless. I might have met my death in that trap."

The lift in the hands of a new porter descended swiftly and stopped with a jerk that threw both men against the sides of the car. While the secretary had been loudly rating the porter during the descent, Mr. Birnbaum had been very silent, but as the two men passed through the hall he might have been seen talking rapidly to his companion.

In the doorway they encountered the vast bulk of Uncle Fiddeyment, who saluted them with a bland and spacious smile.

"They tell me," said Mr. Birnbaum, as they stepped out into the street, "that that shabby old gentleman is one of the best known celebrities of town, yet I cannot but think that his humour of being intoxicated at the Lyceum Theatre on first nights, is, to mention one instance only, presuming too much on the licence extended to the great."

Uncle Fiddeyment took some letters from the rack, and exchanging a happy pleasantry with John Bol the porter, was carried swiftly to the fourth floor. The healthy exercise of the morning walk always put the old gentleman in a delightful temper, and dismissing from his mind with a light laugh the unpleasant contents of the bills that he had found in the rack, he made one or two sparkling epigrams, which were hastily copied down by his son Caradoc who was seated at the writing table, and sauntered out in search of Mr. Cormorant, whose flat was close by. He found the artist dressed in a suit of flannel pyjamas and a coarse Inverness great coat, seated in front of a large unfinished picture called "The Hadger." He had begun this seven years ago, and every morning on rising from his bed he made strong resolutions to finish it at once. He seldom attempted his real work till late at night, when with the aid of correctly disposed candles and the right degree of intoxication he found that grotesque ideas came to him very readily.

The studio was a large bare room, with at one end a tall window giving on to Jermyn Street, and at the other a mirror of exceptional size, before which the decadents would often rehearse their poses before going out to tea parties in Sloane Street. There was little furniture except a large table covered with bottles and glasses, and the yellow paper on the walls was unspoiled by pictures save where, over the mantelpiece, hung a pastel called "Boys drinking Brandy." This was Mr. Cormorant's most cherished possession. He had painted it one summer at Calais, where he was staying with his friend, Ernest Advowson, and the most



tempting offers from American amateurs of the bizarre had never induced him to sell it. He would often sit and look at it and think pleasantly of his own mis-spent boyhood.

Mr. Cormorant was a man of about thirty years of age, slight, with a delicately moulded figure. His eyes were of a watery blue, and his smile was very winning. He wore a fair moustache, and his hair was reddish and rather untidy. He looked gloomy, and shivered a little as he sat, palette in hand, staring vacantly at the big canvas. The morning was always a bad time for him, and it was with a look of genuine pleasure that he welcomed Uncle Fiddeyment.

"I'm so pleased to see you," he said. "I really don't feel in the humour for work this morning, so bring a chair to the fire and look at this letter that I have just received. That impertinent secretary has been really most insulting. It appears that he came up here at some period of last evening, and that some one threw him out, I think it must have been Arrogant, but I'm sure I can't remember—at any rate the fellow says he was hurt and insulted. He has also some foolish notion about my rent being overdue, it is really most unfortunate."

"St. James's is no place for Scotchmen," said Uncle Fiddeyment, as he tossed the letter into the grate. "Please do not let us talk of Mr. Mundell, it would make me dull for a day. I have just left Caradoc; he is working, and smoking too many cigarettes; they only make him stupid, and he is so cross. Decadence in the morning is like Brighton on the August Bank Holiday, very cheap and nasty, but he will try it, he is so conscientious. You and I have never been conscientious, Cormorant, so you shall dress, and we will lunch with Caradoc, and then take a walk in Piccadilly. Caradoc is going to tea with Mrs. Levity, but we will drink absinthe in the Cafe Royal and watch the players taking an intelligent interest in dominoes."

Lunch with the two Milnes was always a serious business, since, while the rules of decadence forbade the exhibition of a hearty appetite at breakfast time, they made no stipulations about lunch, and

the young gentlemen of Belvedere Mansions were accustomed to set about it very earnestly indeed. Mr. Caradoc Milnes was in the happiest of moods. He had found that the three epigrams which Uncle Fiddeyment had let drop earlier in the morning were sufficient material for the construction of a whole chapter, and he had just finished it with, he assured himself, even more than his accustomed brilliancy.

With flow of wine and wit the afternoon passed rapidly away. It was about four o'clock when Mr. Caradoc Milnes' hansom was announced, and after his two friends had assured him that the set of his frock-coat and the arrangement of his hair were quite perfect, he was driven rapidly towards Mayfair.

Mr. Cormorant and Uncle Fiddeyment walked slowly up St. James' Street in the direction of Piccadilly. They were both wearing long dun-coloured overcoats, Uncle Fiddeyment walking with a firm and youthful step while the artist limped a little in his progress. At the corner of Old Bond Street they met the Secretary and Mr. Birnbaum, who responded nervously to their polite salutations.

The Cafe Royal was full, and many of the most famous decadents of town were present to celebrate the hour of the absinthe. Uncle Fiddeyment and Mr. Cormorant passed slowly down the room, bowing to their intimates on every side, and sat down at last at a table near the opening into Glasshouse Street. A few sips of the opalescent liquid and the merry clink and clatter of the restaurant soon brought the two men into the happiest of moods, and Mr. Cormorant began to detail with great vivacity many ingenious schemes for solving the question of his pecuniary embarrassment. His chief hopes, he told Uncle Fiddeyment, were centered in an old aunt that he had, Lady Elizabeth Tittle, who enjoyed the possession of a large income and a fine house in Pont Street, and who had a passion for doing good among the middle classes. It was owing to her bounty, he said, and there was a trace of emotion in his voice, that he had been enabled to pursue his artistic



studies in Paris and Vienna, since his father, who was an engineer retired on a pension, affected an abhorrence for any class of design that did not deal with the construction of railway bridges and aqueducts.

"I have spent many terrible hours," said Mr. Cormorant, "in accompanying Aunt Tittle to the great meetings which are her especial delight; I have



"SHE HAD A PASSION FOR DOING GOOD AMONG THE MIDDLE CLASSES"

inspected to the minutest sanitary detail the prodigiously ugly building which she has erected for the better housing of unmarried solicitors, and I have even gone so far as to design a cover for the magazine published by her pet church, which was returned by the Vicar with a most impolite note. She is," pursued Mr. Cormorant, with the air of a scientist discussing some interesting phenomenon, "a most worthy lady, and her

opinions are frequently referred to by the upper clergy. It was my fortune to introduce to her a retired gutta-percha merchant, who desired to spend the remainder of his life and immense wealth in the laudable endeavour to provide journalists with an university education. This, I am bound to say, failed, owing to the lamentable ingratitude of the journalists, who would cash the cheques provided them for the purpose of proceeding to Oxford, and with the money conduct unseemly revels in Fleet Street and the Strand. The few who did go were sent down almost immediately, and the directors of the fund received a pathetic letter, signed by the heads of twenty-three colleges and halls, praying them to send no more journalists. However, he was not discouraged by his failure, and my aunt has since found the honest fellow so painstaking and capable a partner in the majority of her ambitious schemes that she has always extended towards me the warmest affection. Widespread as are her charities, they do not consume her entire income, and I feel no reluctance in acquainting her with the rigour of my circumstances, and do not doubt that she will readily accede to my request for a little ready money. She has told me that I am her sole heir. She will leave nothing to charity, since she believes that no committee could possibly administer her fortune in the satisfactory manner that she has done herself. The thought of her thousands being dribbled away by incompetent management would prevent her, she declares, from resting quietly in her grave. But I fear I bore you," and Mr. Cormorant, who had been talking fluently in a clear and melodious voice, came to a sudden stop as he noticed with real concern that Uncle Fiddeyment was fumbling nervously with his glass. Hastily summoning the waiter, he continued.

"We have time for another absinthe. After that we will dine at a little restaurant that I know, near Portland Place. The proprietor is a man of infinite spirit and an appreciator of my art. There will be no necessity for immediate payment, and he will be delighted to meet you."

"Cormorant," said the old gentleman, as with practised hand he sent the little stream of water splashing on to the sugar, "your Aunt interests me immensely, and I am not in the least bored. How soon do you propose to negotiate the loan?"

"To-morrow night," answered the artist. "She is going to a meeting on the better understanding of the meat tea as a social force, and I am to sit with her on the platform. It is one of my less irksome duties, and I confess that I am not unwilling to go, for I like to watch the sea of earnest, upturned faces. Aunt Tittle is a very convincing denouncer; she was a great deal in America as a girl and studied under the best preachers. When she is at her best the younger members of the audience are often moved to tears, nor can I myself ever listen to her remarks about Brigham Young without a choky sensation in the throat. After the performance she is coming back to my flat for supper—by the way I must rely on your aid in the matter of getting something to eat and drink, the servants are beginning to obey that ridiculous Secretary's orders, and positively deny me food. Aunt Tittle has never seen my flat, her days are so taken up with good works that she has no time to waste on nephews, so she is going to be unconventional and come at night. I shall behave very nicely at the meeting, and at supper I shall lead the talk to money matters. That, Uncle Fiddeyment is all my plot, and now let us go to dinner. I must go home and work directly afterwards." Just then a little ugly man, like a monkey in a turn-down collar and spectacles, came across the room, and greeting the two men warmly, asked them to dine with him and go on to his box at the Empire. Mr. Cormorant and Uncle Fiddeyment accepted eagerly and they all went out of the restaurant together.

## II.

Meanwhile, the secretary and Mr. Birnbaum had finished their walk, and about five o'clock in the afternoon were comfortably seated before a blazing fire in Mr. Mundell's dining room. There

was no light save what came from the fire, and the two men's faces were thrown into sharp relief as they looked towards the grate. They were talking slowly and composedly to each other, but the secretary's eyes were rather bright, and his assistant's hands trembled a little as he folded and unfolded his fingers across his knee. A large brown paper parcel lay upon the hearth-rug between them.

"I have been to Clarkson's," said Mr. Birnbaum, bending down to untie the strings of the package, "and I think I have got everything. Here is the uniform and here are the beard and eyebrows, I didn't bother about a wig. I tried the make-up in my room, and really the disguise is most complete." He produced a commissionaire's braided coat and trousers, almost exactly similar to those worn by the lift porter in Belvedere Mansions, and laid them on the table. Then he handed Mr. Mundell a short black beard which the latter fingered uneasily.

"Put the things on in the bedroom," he said, "and then walk in here quickly, so that I can judge the effect."

Mr. Birnbaum disappeared through the door and the secretary lit the burners of the chandelier. In a very few minutes Mr. Birnbaum walked rapidly into the room, assuming the military bearing that his volunteer drills had taught him. The transformation was quite startling, and the additional hair on the face and the tight-fitting coat made the little Jew almost distinguished. The heavy eyebrows lent a brilliance to his eyes and the black beard and side whiskers toned down the prominence of his nose.

"Excellent," said Mr. Mundell, "quite excellent. You had better take the things to your room now, while I ring for John Bol and give him a holiday; he can go to-night about ten, and you can take on the lift at once."

Mr. Mundell explained briefly to the porter that the management, being desirous of not over-working their servants, had decided to give him a week's holiday. The worthy fellow mumbled his astonished thanks, and retired at once to wire to his widowed mother in Cornwall announcing his

speedy arrival to pay a long promised visit.

At half-past twelve that night Mr. Cormorant left Romano's and walked slowly towards Trafalgar Square, joyously humming little snatches of French songs that he had learnt in *Quartier Latin* days. The bars were disgorging their guests through all the length of the Strand, and Mr. Cormorant's progress was constantly interrupted by the noisy greetings of friends who were standing in groups at the doorways. He was alone, as Uncle Fideyment, in whom a good dinner produced an instant desire for sleep, had gone home two hours earlier. He reached Belvedere Mansions about one o'clock, and as he walked jauntily up the long half-lit hall, which was quite empty, despite his troubles, no man in London was happier than he.

A light shone through the lift door, which was open, and Mr. Cormorant turned quickly into the opening. His outstretched foot met no floor, and he was only saved from falling among the wheels that were whirling just below by clutching at the iron railing and wrenching himself back into the hall. The lift was not there, and the light that had deceived him shone from a lantern fixed against the damp stone wall of the shaft. Almost immediately the car dropped with a loud rattle, and he found himself staring into the face of a heavy-browed, black-bearded man, dressed in a commissionaire's uniform, who glared at him wildly and mumbled an apology. For a few seconds they stood looking at one another, and a horrible sickly feeling came over Mr. Cormorant as he realised the dreadful death that he had so narrowly escaped. Then, very slowly, and without a word of reproach to the porter for his carelessness, he turned and walked quietly up the stairs. When he reached his own room, he sank back in a chair feeling dazed and terrified, while the dreadful picture of the black pit with its whirling wheels, that glistened as the flickering rays of the lantern met their oily surface, made constant menace before his eyes.

As soon as he had in a measure recovered from the shock, he could think more calmly, and the idea began to form slowly in his brain that there was some-

thing very suspicious in the whole matter. He never remembered the lift door to have been left open before, and that a lantern should have been hung to the wall without any ulterior design, seemed to him to be in the last degree improbable. Again, the fact of the new porter's evident uneasiness and a strange familiarity in the man's face that he could not account for, brought the sure conviction to him that he had very nearly been the victim of a foul plot. He knew that his presence in the Mansions was extremely obnoxious to the management, but he could never believe that dislike would lead the Secretary into a deliberate attempt upon his life. He determined to find Uncle Fideyment and ask his advice upon the matter.

Once more the clatter of the lift disturbed the silence of the house as he walked along the passage, and he reached the door that opened into the shaft just as Mr. Caradoc Milnes stopped out of the car. The porter's hand was stretched out to pull back the gate, and Mr. Cormorant's eye caught the glitter of a strangely fashioned ring which he recognised at once as having often seen worn by Mr. Birnbaum, the assistant-secretary. In a flash he realised the situation, and the familiarity of the man's face was explained. The porter was Mr. Birnbaum himself, disguised with a beard and whiskers, and the occurrence of the open door and the lantern, was part of a deliberate attempt on his life. Mr. Cormorant shivered as the remembrance of his stumble over the edge of the pit, and the shrieking fall of the car came back to him with terrible distinctness, and clutching at Mr. Milnes' arm, he pleaded a sudden faintness. Leaning heavily on the young gentleman, he passed with him into his flat.

Mr. Milnes was in the highest of spirits, for he had spent a most delightful evening, without forgetting a single epigram that he had prepared, and two publishers and a whole room-full of distinguished people had laughed continually at his pleasant witticisms. He was genuinely disturbed at Mr. Cormorant's distress, and after hearing a brief version of the sad story, readily acceded to his proposal of waking Uncle

Fiddeyment and thoroughly discussing the matter. In another ten minutes, the old gentleman was comfortably installed in an armchair by the fireside, and with a long glass at his elbow and an opium tainted cigarette between his lips, was gravely listening to Mr. Cormorant's recital of the affair of the lift, and his subsequent discovery of the wicked plot. He looked very dignified and distinguished, and as the firelight threw fantastic shadows across his kindly face and great massive brow, many of his young friends who were accustomed to regard the old man as a mere figure of fun, would have been startled to see how firm and steadfast an expression a real emotion could lend his countenance to wear.

"There is no doubt at all, Cormorant," he said, as the artist concluded his story, "that a dastardly attempt has been made upon your life. The porter John Bol told me, on my return earlier this evening, that the Secretary had very suddenly given him a holiday and insisted that he should start within a few hours. He had even made him a present of some money for his railway fare, and this most certainly confirms your suspicions. The Secretary and his creature, that detestable little Jew Birnbaum, have concocted this plot between them, for you have not, I believe, paid your rent for some months. Moreover, I have been given to understand by Lumsden, the head waiter, who is confidential to me, that several of the men who have recently left the Mansions have pretended the reason that the noise made by yourself and your friends made a further stay insupportable. So, for these very trivial and ridiculous reasons—that Scotch criminal Mundell and his assistant have determined to get you out of the way."

"It would have been a most dreadful death," said Caradoc Milnes. "Conceive the fall among the wheels and the crushing blow of the lift, oh horrible! The idea has quite taken the taste of Mrs. Merrilee's delightful supper out of my mouth."

"They will certainly try again, or invent some new trap," said Mr. Cormorant. "What am I to do?"

"It would be capital to push the Se-

cretary in himself," said Uncle Fiddeyment, "but I doubt it could be managed, and our suspicions hardly justify an appeal to the police."

"It is so hard," said Mr. Cormorant, "for I am sure that my aunt would have given me some money; at any rate she will not live very long, and I am the heir. I have the best prospects of being presently a rich man, and am I to go in fear of my life? It is very hard indeed."

Caradoc Milnes sat bolt upright and struck a sounding blow on the table. "Cormorant," he said, "do you love your Aunt?"

"I have an excellent respect for her," said Mr. Cormorant in a surprised tone, "but I could not really love any one so dreadfully inartistic."

"Then," said the young gentleman, in a voice that trembled with emotion, "she must be the victim of the trap, you must push her in, Cormorant, you must push her in."

As he said this, a bright happy light came into the young man's eyes. He looked extremely young and ingenuous, and smiled with all the glee of a school-boy who has hit on some clever plan for deceiving a master. There was no pose now in Caradoc Milne's manner, he was frankly, absurdly happy, as he leant back laughing towards his father and his friend, and waiting for their approval of his plot. The brilliancy of the idea had taken immediate power of speech from the other two; they sat spellbound and gazed reverentially at Caradoc Milnes.

Uncle Fiddeyment was the first to break the silence; the grave and serious bearing that had characterised his attention to Mr. Cormorant's story gave place in a flash to an abandon of laughter and the solemn lines that had held down the corners of his mouth twitched into an ecstasy of merriment. Mr. Cormorant's heart was too full for words, but there was a wonderful gratitude in his eyes as he ran to Caradoc Milnes and wrung his hand again and again. The young gentleman jumped to his feet.

"Father," he shouted, "Champagne! The Roederer '84, we have still a few bottles left, and can they fall in a worthier cause than the pledging of Charles Cormorant's future happiness. This shall be a great night, let us drink



in the dawn of the day that is so heavy with fate for us."

The wine foamed merrily into the glasses, and, standing in front of the fireplace with his two friends on either side, Mr. Cormorant, in a firm, manly voice, proposed the health of the trap of Belvedere Mansions. They sat long in eager debate, and the Roederer gave place to some wonderful Waterloo year brandy, while Mr. Cormorant built studios in the air, and Caradoc invited all the charming people that he knew to stay in them. When at last Uncle Fiddeyment had definitely settled the details and the furniture of Mr. Cormorant's two great ateliers in Buda-Pesth and Paris, when Caradoc had composed the letter bidding the guests to the inaugural feast, and when Mr. Cormorant himself had made a grotesque design for the menu cards, they saw that day was even now upon them. The curtains of the dark were shaken by the birth pangs of the morning, which was preparing to leap into light. Through the windows the grey light crept slowly, laying cold fingers on the disorder of their revel. The stealthy on-coming of dawn chilled them, and the merriment died from them, as the relentless machinery of the world banished the night. They began to speak of rest and sleep, to fit them for the business that was to do; the sickness of departed merriment was on them all, and the creeping morning was very ghastly. Suddenly a sparrow lighted on the window ledge and began to make small noises. The fat little bird amused Uncle Fiddeyment, who began to laugh. As his chuckles filled the room, the most charming change came over the scene. The sun appeared, the shadows shrivelled up and whisked up the chimney or under the door, and bright sunshine filled the room.

"Let us," said Uncle Fiddeyment, smacking his great hand on his thigh, "let us go to the Westminster baths and swim for half-an-hour; we shall need cool heads for this night's

work. Come Cormorant, come Caradoc, the sun bids us forth, the streets will be glorious with the joy of the morning, and we shall be the three merriest men in all London."

They clattered down the staircase, and when they reached the passage, Uncle Fiddeyment waved his hand and flung a merry jest at the lift door. "Mis-directed Engine of Death," he cried, "to-day you should be hung with garlands, for to-day you shall be the proud instrument of Charles Cormorant's glorious future." So they passed out into the street, arm in arm, very happily, smiling to each other as they went.

\* \* \* \*

The sight of Mr. Cormorant walking alive and well into Mr. Milnes' flat had been too much for Mr. Birnbaum.



"THEY PASSED INTO THE STREET ARM IN ARM"



Slamming and bolting the gates of the lift, he had consigned all later arrivals to the labour of the stairs, and had made his way quickly to the Secretary, who was anxiously awaiting him in his office. Tearing off his beard and eye-brows, he stamped his foot in uncontrollable rage.

"I have failed," he hissed, "failed by a cursed yard; the brute is unharmed; if he had dared to come up with me in the lift I believe I would have beat the life out of him with my hands."

The Secretary was sitting in an ecstasy of nervous excitement. It was obvious that he had been drinking heavily, and his eyes were red and dilated, with deep encircling furrows puckered up all round them. For an hour he had sat thus, a prey to the most conflicting emotions, now confident, now terrified, now torn by the bitterest hatred, his long fingers beating an endless devil's tattoo on the table before him. He rose as Mr. Birnbaum entered and raised a warning finger. "Quiet, man," he said, "it can't be helped; we shall catch him to-morrow night; I'll tie a string across the doorway and then he will not be able to help stumbling in."

"By the Lord above," said the Jew, "I swear that within two days I will kill Charles Cormorant," and gathering up the parts of his disguise that he had thrown down he adjusted them hastily and walked sulkily to his own rooms.

All that day Uncle Fiddeyment and Caradoc Milnes were inseparable companions to Mr. Cormorant. Towards the evening he became very agitated, and it required all Uncle Fiddeyment's most sparkling epigrams and Caradoc's liveliest conversation to keep him steadfast to his purpose. About six o'clock, while they were strolling in Piccadilly, he had a very severe attack of nervousness and had to be hurried into St. James' restaurant. As soon as he was inside the door he rested his elbows on the counter of the American bar, and burying his face between his hands wept bitterly, to the marked consternation of the bar-tender. He allowed himself at last to be led to a seat, and began

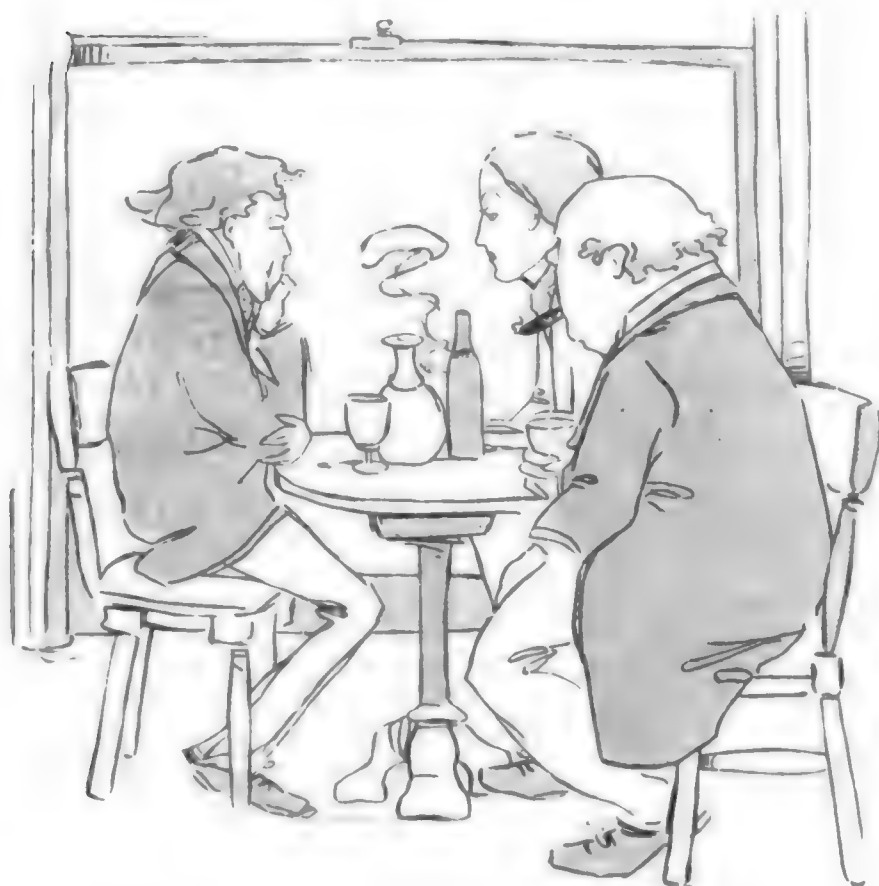
between his sobs to relate several touching anecdotes of his childhood and the many kindnesses shown to him by his aunt. A lady who was sitting near, was greatly moved, and offered him her richly chased silver smelling-bottle. The pungent fumes revived Mr. Cormorant a little, and he begged his friends to excuse him his momentary weakness.

"Courage, my friend," said Uncle Fiddeyment; "you must not be influenced by sentiment. Think of the glorious future, for the time is very near at hand, and so soon as our great affair is concluded we will all three go to Paris and commence the proper spending of this great fortune which has hitherto been so unfortunately misdirected."

The cheery speech lent fresh bravery to Mr. Cormorant, and when at eight o'clock Caradoc and Uncle Fiddeyment waved their handkerchiefs after the rapidly disappearing hansom that was bearing him to Exeter Hall, they knew that, come what might, he would not fail in the honest and straightforward execution of his duty.

It wanted several minutes to the hour of commencement when Mr. Cormorant stood on the steps of Exeter Hall, and suppressing an almost irresistible impulse to fly to Romano's, he made his way to the committee-room.

Lady Elizabeth Tittle, her ample form swathed in a simple gown of black satin, was seated in the midst of a perfect mob of dowagers among whom the attendant clergy flitted like the players in an elaborate game of general post. She wore a simple gold bracelet set with a few emeralds of great value that flashed as she waved her hand in animated conversation with the Dean of Ridgminster, and Mr. Cormorant, when he noticed the familiar stones, decided that they would make a really pretty set of sleeve links. The Lady Elizabeth Tittle was a cheery old thing that one forgave at once for not being young. She had all the charm of fat, a rare quality, and her eyes, albeit they were foolish eyes, wore a genial and kindly expression. Though she was an earnest person, she did not look as if she was an earnest person, and you could hand her



YAD. LUEIN

"TOWARDS THE EVENING HE BECAME VERY AGITATED"

the crumpets at an afternoon tea with no twinge of discomfort.

She welcomed Mr. Cormorant with a little squeak of pleasure, and squeezed his hand affectionately between both her mittened palms.

"Oh Charles," she said, in the high pitched voice of the public speaker at bay, "I'm delighted that you've come; you know Mr. Ladbroke I think; he really thinks that tea with a heavy meal tends to make the middle classes sullen; help me to prove how utterly wrong he is."

Mr. Cormorant was not an authority on tea, but he argued with the Dean in the pleasantest manner in the world, and was deep in a most interesting discussion about the new Altar pictures in Ridgminster Abbey when the Duchess of Salford's butler, who was always retained on these occasions because of his Episcopal manner, announced that the meeting was about to commence.

The dowagers and clergy filed into the hall, and took their seats in a semi-circle, like Mr. Burgess' Minstrels, and Mr. Cormorant, sitting by his aunt in the centre of the imposing group, felt, as he placed his white-gloved hands on his knees, that he bore a ridiculous resemblance to Massa Johnson, at the St. James' Hall. The three weary, smokeless, drinkless hours of monotonous oration passed very painfully for him, and as he heard the cab bells tinkle out in the Strand, and the omnibuses rumble east and west, he thought enviously of the Milnes, father and son, doubtless comfortably established in a merry pub', speculating philosophically about the impending tragedy of the night. He inspected the programme wearily. The list of turns was certainly attractive. Two cabinet ministers, a society actor, some deans, and a host of highly connected ladies, made a combination that should

certainly produce an awed obedience in the assembled representatives of the middle classes. Mr. Cormorant made a pencil mark against the names of the speakers from whom he expected to obtain a little amusement. However, the Bishop of Ledwick, the star of the evening, was painfully dull, and Mr. Herbert Storm, of the King's Theatre, was obviously biased in his remarks by his relation to an eminent tea and bacon merchant. It is true that the expulsion of two persons connected with the press, who suffered themselves to be audibly critical, provided a brief interval of excitement, but Mr. Cormorant was unable to suppress a feeling of intense relief when the Rev. Sydney Bagehot dismissed the vast audience with some well-selected quotations from the Old Testament, and a few gracious words of thanks to the president.

He was prominent in the hunt for carriages, and, after a vigorous search, and a hurried visit to Fleming's, was soon seated with the Lady Elizabeth Tittle in the family coach which had been constructed for the coronation of King William IV. The press of vehicles was very great, and the magnificent pair of bays that were the constant envy of Lady Tittle's relations on her husband's side, stamped impatiently as they were wedged between steaming omnibus horses, waiting for the fall of the policeman's imperious hand. There had been some rain during the evening, but now the sky was quickly clearing, and the long finger of the Nelson monument pointed to a bright star-spangled vault. Through the shaggy drift of clouds that still hung over the house-tops, the absinthe-coloured moon peered like a sea-lion's eye, and Mr. Cormorant, as he stared out of the window, was rapidly arranging skylines for use in future pictures.

The conversation ran lightly from matters of general philanthropy to those of the family circle, and Mr. Cormorant was arguing in a most convincing manner that his cousin, the Earl of Hanley, who had married his valet's widow, was really a public-spirited gentleman, when the sudden stoppage of the horses and the presence of the heavily-caped footman at the door

announced their arrival at Belvedere Mansions.

He jumped out hastily, and while Lady Tittle was still arranging her skirts and furs in the gloom of the carriage, his eye involuntarily sought the upper part of the building. From a corner window of the fourth floor the blind had been drawn a little back, and as the gleam of light shot from the opening across the roadway, Mr. Cormorant knew that Uncle Fiddeyment and Caradoc were waiting anxiously. From a lower window, right above the hall door, he caught a momentary glimpse of a pair of malignant eyes above a heavy black beard, that were watching him intently. He laughed a little as his aunt leant heavily on his arm, and together they walked slowly down the long, dim passage.

The house was absolutely still, and as their feet sank into the heavy carpet there was no sound save the rustle of Lady Tittle's skirts, and the loud ticking of the staircase clock. Then there was a little clicking noise and a distant rumble of wheels turning slowly high up in the building, and Mr. Cormorant knew that the assistant had shut himself into the car, and was poised for his murderous drop through the shaft. A light shone through the lift door, and a faint smell of oil came into the hall, making, it seemed to him, the device so transparent that he remembered with a feeling of great thankfulness, his aunt's extreme short-sightedness. He did not hesitate for a moment, but leading the way to the door with a firm step, he bowed to Lady Tittle to enter. The old lady walked quickly forward, and catching first one foot and then the other in a wire which had been stretched across the gateway, pitched with a terrified scream into the pit, while, simultaneously, the lights of the lift car leaped into view before Mr. Cormorant's eyes. There was a horrible crunching noise, the screech of stopping wheels, and a black-bearded man, with wildly glittering eyes, rushed through the door, and, stumbling to the opposite wall, buried his face between his hands.

Mr. Cormorant watched his heaving shoulders for a few seconds, and then

realising that he was the possessor of two millions of money, mounted the stairs with a free and assured step.

For nearly an hour Uncle Fiddeyment and Caradoc had been sitting in the dining room of their flat, starting at every sound of stopping wheels, and rising continually to watch the street for Mr. Cormorant's coming. At last Uncle Fiddeyment beckoned Caradoc to join him at the window, and the two men saw the fore-shortened figures of a stout old lady and a slim man, who limped in his walk, move across the pavement from a carriage, and disappear under the glare of the hall lantern. Then, after a seemingly incredible length of time, they heard footsteps coming quickly down the passage, and the door swung open to admit Mr. Cormorant.

"It is done," he said, with great composure. "Death must have been almost instantaneous; there was only one scream. I think Mr. Birnbaum believes he has killed me; I was standing back in the shadow and he is blubbering down in the hall like a girl, quite unnerved."

"How shocked they will be when they find out their mistake," said Caradoc, "for of course the poor men don't know that now you are very rich; and how pleased the Secretary will be to get your cheque."

"I trust that Mr. Birnbaum will not be put in prison," said Mr. Cormorant; "he has done me the greatest of services. I will, I think, advance him to a position of trust in my household."

Uncle Fiddeyment's laughter rang loud and clear through the room, while he banged with his feet and hands on the table and floor in a pure ecstasy of childish glee, till the glasses all danced on the sideboard, and the white roses fluttered down from the picture of Charles the First and lay in a crumpled heap on the carpet. His great head wagged on his quivering shoulders as he struggled through his uncontrollable mirth to voice his congratulations to Mr. Cormorant. Caradoc Milnes was laughing too, but there was a reserved self-conscious note in his merriment. It was the deprecatory laugh of the genius to his admiring friends, and he

patted Mr. Cormorant on the shoulder with a friendly grace as the artist poured out his thanks to the inventor of the great and wonderful scheme.

For a long time they sat talking, and in the joyful flow of mirth and jest and breathless anticipation, the murmur and scurry of the scared, awakened household passed all unnoticed by their heedless ears. High up in one of the topmost floors Mr. Birnbaum whimpered as he watched a heap of hair and cloth flame and sizzle and crumble to ashes in the flaming grate, while downstairs the burly constables tramped the corridors.

In the middle of an hysterical group of maids and tenants, the Secretary, white and trembling, answered the crisp interrogations of a suspicious inspector, shuddering to see the pencils of the reporters tracing rapid hieroglyphics in the pages of their note-books.

Next day, while Caradoc Milnes interviewed his tailor in Conduit Street and Uncle Fiddeyment was superintending the packing in Belvedere Mansions, Mr. Cormorant had a long interview with Messrs. Citron and Frost, his aunt's solicitors. Mr. Frost received the young artist in person, and while showing a perfectly sincere sorrow for the lamentable decease of his esteemed client, congratulated Mr. Cormorant warmly on his succession to so magnificent a fortune. He begged that during the necessary formalities for proving the will, Mr. Cormorant would allow him to make any convenient advances of money, and in the misty dawn of the following morning the three conspirators climbed the steep gangway from the deck of the *s. s. Tamise* to the Quay at Dieppe.

For a month they lived in a little village near the town. Oh! the happy joyous days while Uncle Fiddeyment drank deep at the *estaminet*, and Mr. Cormorant sketched among the fields or on the plage, and Caradoc went daily to Dieppe to talk with the great folk from St. Petersburg or Paris who came from their villas and hotels to the Casino. Like all good things their stay was soon ended, and after the postman had brought a letter from Messrs. Citron and Frost to say that all arrangements were completed for Mr.

Cormorant's accession to his heritage, Uncle Fiddeyment set once more to the packing, while Caradoc and Cormorant bade touching adieus to their friends in the town. Ere long, one bright, fair morning, half a hundred handkerchiefs were fluttering at the pier-head as, from the good ship *Tamise*, the friends waved their farewells and set their faces firmly towards England.

in the affair of Lady Tittle's death, and many of his old clients, hearing of Mr. Cormorant's departure, had returned to Belvedere Mansions, so that it was with a real pleasure and a pleasant recollection of their earlier friendship that the Secretary hastened to accept Mr. Cormorant's invitation to luncheon. After a little correspondence, Mr. Birnbaum had agreed to enter Mr.



"FOR A MONTH THEY LIVED IN A LITTLE VILLAGE."

A few days later a tall, angular man, from whose broad shoulders a long neck, sticking out stiffly from a low collar, bore a face in which the wolf and the fox struggled for mastery, stepped into the hall of the Hotel Cecil, and, giving his name as Mr. Mundell, desired to be shown into Mr. Cormorant's presence. He had been exonerated from all blame

Cormorant's service as body servant, and in a few minutes, vested in the magnificent Cormorant liveries, he bowed Mr. Mundell into his master's presence.

Mr. Cormorant, Uncle Fiddeyment, and Mr. Caradoc Milnes, were seated at a table that bore a most elegant lunch, and Uncle Fiddeyment, who was



dressed in a beautifully fitting frock-coat, stretched out his hand with a glad shout of welcome to the Secretary.

The others were no less hearty in their greeting and all four were presently drinking champagne out of the great silver tankards that had been given to an ancestor of Lady Tittle's by the Black Prince himself. They pledged the good luck of Belvedere Mansions, and chatting in the most amiable manner in the world about the event of a month ago, discussed Mr. Cormorant's brilliant future. As good Birnbaum brought pen and ink, and Mr. Cormorant drew a cheque for the exact amount that he owed the Secretary, Uncle Fiddeyment could not restrain his emotion. It was a touching sight.

The shadows had all gone, a new and glorious day had dawned, there was no more ill feeling, and everything was like the ending of some romantic tale. Good Birnbaum himself felt compelled to shed a furtive tear. Never was there a more affecting scene, and in after years it became the dearest reminiscence of the Secretary, who always remained Mr. Cormorant's true, though humble friend.

After a little more champagne had been drunk, the Secretary took a profuse leave, and accompanied by The Young Gentleman, who was walking a distance upon his way, left the Hotel.

Mr. Cormorant sank into a deep sleep.

There was no one there but Uncle Fiddeyment.



# Clouds

WRITTEN BY ERNEST G. HENHAM. ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR

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**C**LOUDS are familiar objects to all of us, in fact we sometimes think that we see far too much of them. How many people, hurrying on their business or pleasure, give them a serious thought, except to remark carelessly upon some particularly beautiful sky-picture, unless it is when they are preparing for a day's excursion, and anxiously watch the dark masses as they roll up with threatenings of rain? Perhaps a little general information concerning the natural roof that hovers over us may not be unacceptable.

First of all let us consider the cause of cloud formation. We may rise on a clear summer's morning to find a cloudless sky, but in a short time up come the heavy masses, blotting out blue sky and sun, and down pours the rain. These clouds have drifted up gradually with the wind, but how did they come into existence? In this way: when the air at any part of the atmosphere is cooled below the temperature of the dew point, a portion of the vapour that is suspended in the atmosphere becomes condensed, that is converted into little drops of water, and the result is fog, or a cloud, according as the condensation takes place near the ground or in some higher region. This sounds a little scientific, and we must hasten to explain the meaning of the term dew point. By it we understand the temperature to which the actual temperature of the air must be reduced, in order that the vapour which it contains may be wrung out as it were in sufficient quantities to saturate it. We call it the dew point, because it forms a limit, and when the temperature drops below this limit, the air is no longer capable of holding the vapour, some of which is deposited as

dew. For a familiar instance, take a sponge that is in constant use and squeeze it between the hands, when drops of water will be forced out.

We have all noticed the dew in summer and the frost in winter. They are precisely the same things; but not everyone, perhaps, has observed that the supply of each is entirely withheld on a cloudy night. During the day the earth receives from the sun far more heat than she gives forth, but when night comes the surface cools rapidly, with the result that there is a deposit of dew, or if the temperature drops below 32 degrees (Fahr.) the dew becomes frost. The clouds form a protective mantle to the earth against the cold of space. Certainly the earth gives forth its heat, but the clouds intercept this heat and simply return it to the earth. Those of us who are gardeners are in the habit of protecting our young plants, when the temperature approaches freezing point, by throwing a matting, or some such covering, over them. We know why we do this, and we ought to understand the principle that is involved. The heat continually rises, but the covering as persistently arrests it and returns it to the earth. This goes on all the time, and thus the plants are kept from becoming nipped by the frost. To all intents and purposes this covering over the plants serves exactly the same purpose as the kindly clouds that protect the earth.

We understand that there is nothing massive about the clouds apart from their appearance. They are composed merely of watery vapour, collections of tiny vesicles of water floating in the atmosphere, marking the stage between actual vapour and rain, which rain is poured down at intervals upon the

earth. We know that the clouds give us rain, but is everyone aware that we are only being given back what has been taken away from us, that in fact the clouds are vehicles for removing water from places where it can be spared to spots where it is required? And this brings us to the strange fact of ceaseless change. Note the drops of rain that patter cheerily upon your umbrella. They are falling for the first time, you think? It is hard to realise, unless we have a thorough grasp of the principles of chemistry, that those very drops may have fallen upon the primitive monkey before the age of man had arrived. Everything in nature, each blade of grass, or drop of water, is indestructible. You may take your rain-drop, you may analyse it, swallow it, what you will, but it will defeat you; it will return to vapour, fall again as moisture, and so on, round and round the cycle of ceaseless change as long as the laws of nature hold good.

But we have not sufficiently explained how the rain is made. We may state very broadly that when the thermometer is rising clouds are being formed, that is to say the increase of heat is busy converting water into vapour and replenishing the aqueous atmosphere; when the thermometer is falling the clouds are emptied, that is to say the reduction of temperature condenses part of the vapour, which falls to the ground under the name of rain. We must remember that it is only the clouds which are thus seriously affected by the change of temperature; the atmosphere itself is composed almost entirely of oxygen and nitrogen, two invisible and colourless gases which the most intense cold will not reduce to liquids; were it not so, existence under our present form would be impossible; these two important gases moderate the action of the clouds, influence the changes, and regulate our rain supply. We have said that heat draws water into the air in the form of vapour, but the process is a lengthy one. It may be compared to a drop of water falling at intervals into a sponge; it is a long time before either air or sponge can be saturated. When the air becomes so, the slightest fall in temperature forms what we may call

the squeezing process, and down comes —not all the rain. Certainly not. Just that portion of the vapour that these invaluable gases, oxygen and nitrogen, have permitted to be condensed. When the Almighty brought the flood to destroy the earth, we believe that He simply suspended the operations of the atmospheric gases for the time. Here is the process of rain-making. Take the dirty puddle that gleams in your street under the powerful rays of the sun. The latter draws up this water into vapour; the vapour condenses into vesicles, literally tiny hollow bubbles of water, so light that they float together, millions of them, and form a cloud, and when these bubbles are broken by reduction of temperature, they fall, either in drops of rain, or in flakes of snow. Watch a child blowing soap bubbles, and notice, when the bubble bursts, that a single drop of water falls to the ground. It is the same principle.

But, some will say, how is it that rain is so unevenly distributed? Clouds drift everywhere, but how often do we hear of rain falling over the desert of Sahara? It is a natural question, but one that can be easily answered. Many of us look upon mountains as huge masses of barren rock, cumbersome and useless, spread over territory that might have been valuable had it only been flat and verdant; at first sight we do not perceive how there can possibly be any sympathy between clouds and mountains. That such an attraction does exist, many a small country knows to its salvation. Notice how the mountain chains are distributed over the face of the earth in fair and just proportion; evidently they were not so placed without an object. Compare the mountain-enclosed region with the flat desert; one is covered with fruit, flowers, and verdure, while the other shows nothing but arid sand, where the wanderer must perish unless he is well provided with supplies. The reason for all this rests simply upon the fact that mountains are nothing more or less than condensers, which attract the clouds and drain them of their contents. The numerous rivers that have their sources among the mountains afford us the best proof of this, nor is

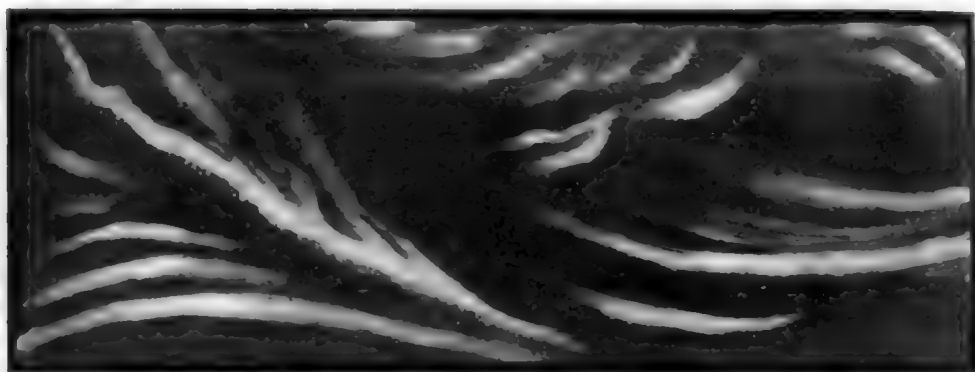


FIG. 1

this the only way in which mountains benefit the human race; we may return to this subject later. Forests have the same power, on a lesser scale, of thus attracting clouds.

When we come to consider the classification of clouds, we find that they exist in three primary forms, namely, Cirrus, Cumulus, and Stratus, from which we obtain the modifications, Cirro-cumulus, Cirro-stratus, Cumulo-stratus, Cirro-cumulo-stratus. This last variety is the most interesting, and many will recognise it more readily by its other name, Nimbus.

Cirrus (Fig. 1) is the daintiest and in some respects the most beautiful of all the clouds. It is also the loftiest, not infrequently attaining the height of ten miles. We have all seen this lovely cloud on a bright clear day, and have compared it to everything that is pretty and fragile, such as a feather, which it often resembles, though it varies greatly both in extent and form. It would, however, be impossible to give it a more fitting name than the one it possesses, which signifies first a tendril, and later a lock of hair. The density of this cloud is very slight, and it is thought to be composed of minute snow crystals.

Any unoccupied person, sitting in the open when cirrus is present overhead, might do worse than while away an hour watching the dainty fragments. During that time, he may see a complete change, or he may leave the scene practically as it was when he first looked upon it. If the cirrus is near other clouds, he may see it disappear quite suddenly—melt as it were like a hand-

ful of snow in the sun. By this he may know that the cirrus is on a low level. If little or no change takes place, he may learn that the cirrus is in a lofty position, and quite isolated from other clouds.

As this fragile cloud is of great service in indicating coming storms, we must here briefly mention the wind. Most people, when they wish to know the direction of the wind, look round for a weathercock. If they looked at the clouds, they might notice detached fragments floating in contrary directions, and they would rush to the conclusion that such erratic messengers could be nothing but unreliable. As a matter of fact, this is just where the clouds are so serviceable. If we had not them to guide us, we could not be so accurate in forecasting weather and approaching changes. The weathercock has scarcely any value at all, and no meteorologist would dream of going by it when making his observations. It is the clouds that give him his information regarding the wind. Now the cirrus, owing to its lofty position, shows in its motions the general movements of the upper atmosphere. We have little other means of discovering the direction of these currents, therefore it is the beautiful cirrus that so often warns us of that approaching atmospheric change which threatens us when we open our morning paper and glance at the forecast.

Cumulus (Fig. 2) is another beauty, and is popularly known as the "cloud of day," because the conditions necessary for its formation are more commonly

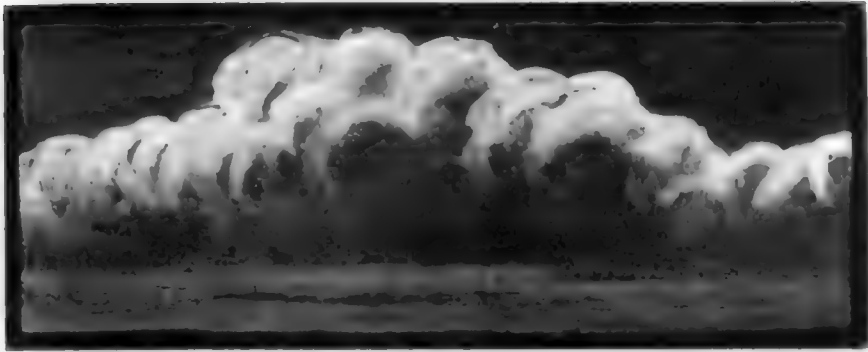


FIG. 2

present in the day. Though this cloud is formed during the hours of light, it may often be seen after dark, and very beautiful is the sight of cumulus on a clear, quiet night. This cloud forms a few hours after sunrise, goes on increasing until the hottest part of the day, and is supposed to vanish about sunset; but, as may be gathered by observation, it by no means allows itself to be bound down by these arbitrary rules. We all know the appearance of this cloud—convex masses piled one upon another, as implied by its name. Probably many of us have indulged in some happy day-dream, lying among the heather, lulled by the murmur of the bees, and watching the mighty masses of the great white snow mountains, as we have aptly named the cumulus. There is no sight in nature more gratifying or more soothing; the cumulus is as essentially the fair weather cloud, as the cirrus is the cloud of fragile beauty. Towards evening we have seen the white crests dyed by the colours of the setting sun—colours that increase and grow darker as the shadows rise. Taking our scientific peep at this impressive cloud, we find that, unlike the cirrus, it is a cloud of dense structure; under the heading cumulus are included all clouds that have a rounded form. This globular apex is caused by the ascending current, which is much stronger at the centre than at any other part, and therefore carries up the vapour to a greater height. For a comparison, look at a sail bellying, as the expression is, with the wind. It is a lower atmosphere cloud, and moves

with the earth winds, being entirely uninfluenced by the air of the upper strata. The cumulus is formed by currents of warm air, rising from the ground as the latter is heated by the sun; of course, when the air reaches a stratum that is cold enough to reduce its temperature below the dew point (as explained above) it becomes condensed into cloud. For an analogy, look at the condensed steam that issues from the spout of a kettle.

Other varieties of this cloud are the Small Cumulus (Fig. 3) and the Roll Cumulus (Fig. 4). The latter is very rarely seen, and an inexperienced eye might set it down as a variety of cirro-stratus. The rounded pipe-like appearance shows that it is a true cumulus.

Looking at Stratus (Fig. 5) after cumulus is something like turning from the pleasures to the dark realities of life. This ominous cloud is very like the storm-cloud, indeed the latter is sometimes called stratus in meteorology, for



FIG. 3



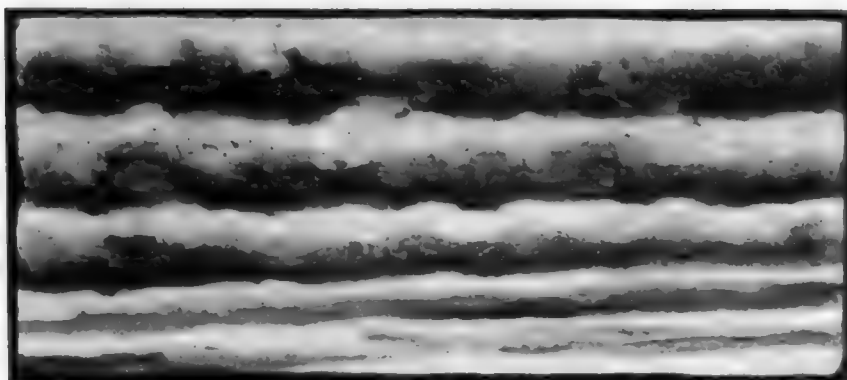


FIG. 4

unless rain be actually falling at the time of observation, the clouds are recorded, not as nimbi, but strati. The actual operation of the storm is necessary before a cloud can be nimbus. The stratus is a broadly-extended horizontal sheet spread over the face of the sky, increasing in density as it proceeds upwards. Although it is called the "cloud of night," we often see it by day, indeed almost any winter's day in London we may look upon the depressing prospect

earth and spreads upwards gradually; as a natural consequence the condensation of vapour appears first near the earth; it increases as it spreads upwards, as numerous layers of air are cooled below the dew point. Nor is this all; smoke, soot, and particles of dust contribute to the density of the stratus, not only by their actual presence, but because each such particle as it is cooled by radiation, receives a deposit of water from the air. The stratus is



FIG. 5

of the dark sheet of vapour spread above the foggy mist of carbonic-acid gas that is formed by the smoke of a million or more chimneys. The theory of the stratus is that it forms about sunset, grows denser during the night, and is dispelled by the rays of the morning sun. It is caused by vapours that have risen during the day; towards evening these vapours naturally approach the earth, because the ascending currents fail for lack of heat. During the night the cooling of the air begins near the

usually accompanied by small white patches of cloud that at first sight seem to have no affinity with it. These are known as detached strati (A, Fig. 5), which have been broken off from the parent cloud. From what we have said it can readily be gathered that the stratus belongs to the lower atmosphere.

We come to the modifications of the three fundamental types, which, with a single exception, we may dismiss with a few words. First we have cirrocumulus (Fig. 6), which, as its name

implies, is a mixture of cirrus and cumulus. This is an upper atmosphere cloud that is dear to the heart of the artist, who, by the way, generally does all he can to improve upon nature. The cirro-cumulus forms what is known as the mackerel sky, and the quaint little groups of clouds have been compared to all sorts of things ; the best comparison

the mock suns and moons, the Coronæ, and Halos. It is formed through the gradual settling down of cirrus through the atmosphere. In some respects this is the most interesting cloud of the series, as it is, *par excellence*, the fantastic cloud of fiction and fact. For this is the cloud which forms those strange shapes of giants and monsters



FIG. 6

is a flock of sheep, which they certainly resemble. This cloud is formed from cirrus, by the tendrils of the latter breaking ; they then collapse into the roundish masses we are all familiar with on a quiet summer's day. The holiday-maker may rejoice when he sees the mackerel sky, for cirro-cumulus is a sure sign of dry and warm weather.

that we sometimes gaze upon in wonder. This is the cloud that has given the idea of the fighting warriors of the air, with many another sky-picture, to the poets and writers of old. This is the cloud that Hamlet pointed out to Polonius, with the words, "Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?" This cloud is frequently broken up

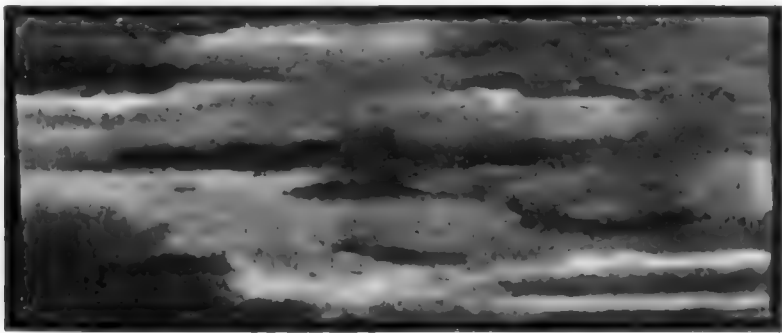


FIG. 7

The blend that naturally follows is that known as cirro-stratus (Fig. 7) another lofty cloud, and one endowed with most erratic tendencies ; sometimes it descends to quite a low level, and then it ceases to be a snow cloud and becomes a water cloud. It possesses very wide extent indeed, and is the cloud through which are exhibited

into groups that resemble shoals of fish. The cirro-stratus will amply repay a long and careful observation with its Protean freaks of change.

Cumulo-stratus (Fig. 8) is perhaps the grandest of all the clouds. It lacks the beauty of the simple cumulus, and possesses few points of real interest to the non-scientist. It rises from a

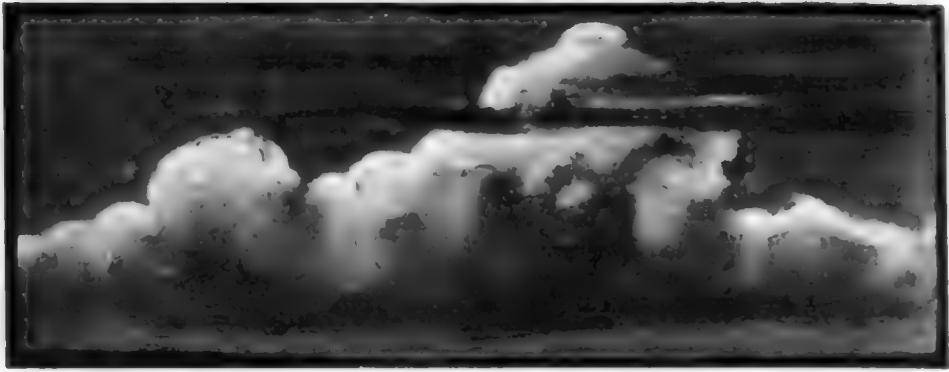


FIG. 8

horizontal stratum and forms great overhanging masses of cumulus, while it is formed, as may readily be guessed, by a blending of cirro-stratus with the snow mountains of the cumulus, and is not infrequently traversed by lines of dark cloud; it has been called the "mushroom cloud," as it sometimes assumes the form of a gigantic fungus. It is a lower atmosphere cloud, like the last and greatest of them all.

Cirro-cumulo-stratus, or Nimbus (Fig. 9), deserves an article to itself. This is the rain-cloud, or the storm-cloud, which has been the object of human fear and veneration from the very earliest times. As its name implies, it is a composite cloud made up of the three primary forms. As it advances across the sky, an observer may notice that its front presents a marked outline, like that of a heavy cumulo-stratus, with some cirrus above. When it has overspread the sky, it is mixed up with the falling rain and assumes a uniform dark appearance.

We know that the storm-cloud is a very terrible thing, and some of us

have witnessed its power; we have seen houses, trees, beasts, and men broken and destroyed by its discharges of electricity. Let us see how it obtains this power. Electricity, as we all know, is caused by friction; the wind bears along the storm-cloud at a slight distance above the earth, with the result that the latter becomes from this friction an electric machine, while the rain-charged clouds, after so much rubbing against the mountains and trees are surcharged with the electric fluid, which escapes in sparks we call lightning and in discharges we have named thunder. We cannot wonder at the severity of our storms, but rather at the mildness of their nature, when we consider the immense amount of electricity that has been thus stored away. The reason that we are not altogether destroyed by the storm-cloud is because nature has provided the earth with billions of conductors, that are constantly and gradually draining off the electricity. The most important of these conductors are the lofty mountain chains to which we promised to revert;

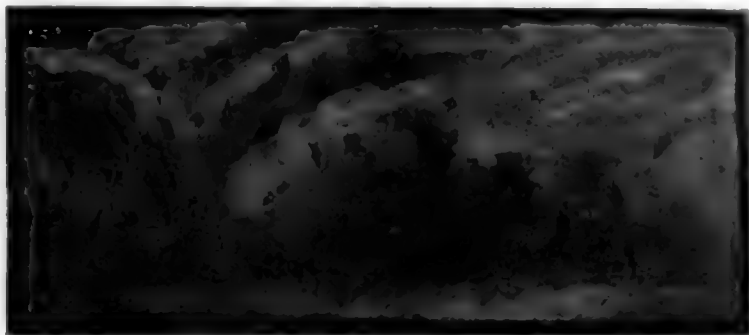


FIG. 9

these craggy summits not only bring us water and life, but further safeguard that life by depriving the clouds of their terrible element of destruction; not only the mountains, but everything pointed in nature, each leaf of the forest, every grass blade in the field, are conductors that rob the clouds silently. The tree is the most perfect conductor imaginable. But it is sometimes destroyed, you will say. Certainly there are times, when the electricity is generated more rapidly than it can be dispersed; under such circumstances we know of no means of conquering the lightning. The pointed conductors on our houses have been copied from nature; how far they fall short of their model can be realised, when we state that the smallest twig on any tree or bush in our garden is far more effectual than the points of our expensive metallic conductor.

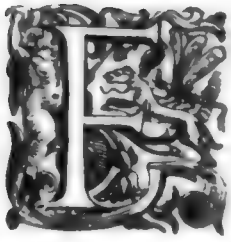
When we consider the power of the storm-cloud, we cease to wonder why it has always formed the basis of mythology in every language; even our own ancestors worshipped it under the name of Thor, whose voice was the thunder. It is the storm-cloud that gave the world a strange weird legend, which in the middle ages was accepted as truth. Here is a rough outline of the myth. Men wished to explain how Solomon cut the great stones for the temple, and they finally decided, from legends almost as old as the world itself, that he had made use of the blood of the worm *Schamir*, which he had procured by sending Benaiah, with orders to cover the pelican's nest with a sheet of glass. When the bird returned, and could not reach her young, she flew away and presently came back with the worm in her beak; she lay it upon the glass, which was shattered at the contact, but when Benaiah shouted she dropped the worm, and he seized it and carried it to the king. It is not too much to say that this myth forms the ground-work of almost all our folklore, the best of our fairy-tales, and the majority of our superstitions. Under various forms the myth flourishes in every country, and in little English villages to-day we may still find the belief in

*Schamir* as strong as it was over a thousand years ago. But in our Scandinavian lore *Schamir* is never a worm. It is anything that has the power of rending or breaking open. Thus we have the plant that restores life to the dead; the black stone that gives sight to the blind; the fern seed that opens the eyes of man's inner vision; the springwort that cleaves the rocks, and the innocent forget-me-not that has the same power, and which, when left heedlessly behind in the cave of treasures, calls pitifully, "Forget not the best. Forget-me-not"; the "hand of glory," the ghastly hand of the murderer that bursts open locks and bolts. But we need not multiply instances, for they are numberless. They all point towards one and the same thing, each legend and superstition points, as clearly as the needle of the compass indicates the north, towards the storm-cloud, with its electric sparks of lightning that rend and burst and part violently. So the next time we are hurrying on business or pleasure, with umbrella upraised, we may well spare a thought for the cloud that is inconveniencing us. Remember that it has supplied us with many a beautiful story, many a strange myth, that we have enjoyed by the fireside; remember that the storm-cloud forms the basis of much of our literature, and that it has supplied fuel to the imagination of many poets and artists through the course of centuries. From almost every country on the face of the earth prayers have been offered to the cloud which we now harshly and scientifically designate cirro-cumulo-stratus.

We have not space for a consideration of the optical phenomena of the cloud-world, the Rainbow, the Coronæ, and Halos, and the six forms of the Aurora, but we must briefly mention Scud, a term used to indicate detached broken clouds drifting very rapidly with the wind. They may be moving at a high level or at a low level; if the former they are composed of cirro-stratus or cirro-cumulus; if the latter they are composed of stratus. Scud may generally be accepted as a sign of cold and unsettled weather.

# On the Banks of the Seine

WRITTEN BY GEORGE GALE THOMAS. ILLUSTRATED BY PHOTOGRAPHS



FROM its source on the slopes of the hills that bound the rich Côte d'Or, the Seine runs its uneventful course for nearly two hundred miles, until, passing through the Pont de Bercy, it enters Paris, and for eight miles throbs with the life of the great city.

In the centre, beneath the towers of Notre Dame, rises the Île de la Cité, resembling—to quote Victor Hugo—"an immense tortoise, its bridges protruding from it like feet."

Time was when the river had glorious sport in battling with these bridges, each of the nine, save one, having been carried away in its turn by some disaster; while one, more unfortunate than the rest—the Pont St. Michel, on the south side of the island—has been swept away three times, once by a pack of moving ice. The sole survivor—the Pont Neuf—has accordingly become a proverb for strength, and the Parisian in vigorous health is fond of referring to himself as being sound "as the Pont Neuf."

On sweeps the river past the stately Louvre and the Jardin des Tuileries, and, finally passing out of the city through the Pont d'Auteuil, clings longingly round the skirts of the Bois de Boulogne, as though unwilling to depart.

Then it winds disconsolately down through the plains of Normandy, awakening to a feeble burst of life at Rouen, and finally loses itself in the sea at Havre. As Michelet observed, "Paris, Rouen and Havre are one street, of which the Seine is the High Street."

Up and down the eight miles of its course through the heart of Paris, stretch the stone *quais* which form the river embankments. Tradition has it that some of them—at the Île de la Cité—were built in the time of Julius Cæsar. This island—the Lutetia of the Romans—is the very cradle of Paris, the tribe of the Parisii inhabiting it giving their name to the city. During modern excavations on the island, beneath the site of the present Palais de Justice, a Roman palace was laid bare, and the great "frigidarium" of the baths, which remains in a state of perfect preservation, is one of the most interesting sights of the city.

On the south bank opposite, some ruins of an ancient vaulted hall were discovered; while on the north bank, the remains of a subterranean aqueduct were brought to light, as also a basin with which it was supposed to be connected in the garden of the Palais Royal.

Most of the *quais*, however, are comparatively modern, and but little romance of history clusters around their grey stones. Yet from early spring to late autumn they are full of present interest in variety of life and movement.

Here, when the boulevards seem hot and stifling, the Parisian comes to enjoy the fresh, cool air, for which the river acts as a great duct through the city, and to watch the little steamboats swinging merrily up and down stream.

Most visitors see little beyond the changing crowds that pass up and down the pavements, or linger around the bright little newspaper kiosks; but



if you turn aside down one of the narrow slopes to the water's edge, you find yourself in the chief club-house of the tramps and out-of-works of Paris.

Here no ruthless *agent de police* disturbs the weary tramp in his siesta, and orders him to move on. Down under the lee of the high wall, he is safe from prying eyes, and can make himself as comfortable as the circumstances permit on the rough, stone seat, while he has only to walk across the little gravel beach to perform his toilet in the river.

Sometimes a sudden wave from a

which the wondering visitor may journey on a tiny tramway. Here is a corner where the unemployed may be found overhauling their wardrobes in the sun after their morning wash.

A little distance away, in another sheltered spot, we come upon a grey-haired veteran, busily engaged with needle and thread in patching his nether garments. There is a leisurely ease in his movements which is restful to witness. Alas! time is not money for him, and so he goes calmly on with head bent over his work all the morning; while a few yards away a noisy



THE CHEAPEST BARBER IN PARIS

passing steamer catches him incautiously, and swamps him in the midst of his ablutions, much to the amusement of his companions; but he takes it philosophically, and calmly proceeds to undress and lay out his scanty garments to dry in the sun.

Under the shadow of the Pont de Solferino, on the Quai des Tuileries, a great iron-barred gate closes one of the entrances to the underground world of Paris—"les Egouts"—the network of sewers and tunnels for electric wires and gas-pipes which honeycombs the foundations of the City, and down

group of loafers is gathered close in under the wall, throwing dice for "sous."

As the morning goes on, the tramps are not left in undisturbed possession. Down comes a shabby little man with a bag, and takes up his post in front of the great blocks of stone piled against the wall below the Quai de la Conférence. He lays out his implements on the stone, ties his strop to an iron ring, fills his mug from the river, and announces to the onlookers that he is ready to shave the world at one sou a head! On Sundays and holidays

business is brisk, and a row of customers wait their turn. When the shave is over, the "shaved" walks down the bank, and, kneeling, washes his face in the river.

The open-air barber is the cheapest in Paris: shave, one sou; hair cut, two sous! Neither rent nor taxes to pay, and the only capital required, a razor, scissors, brush, comb, soap, and a tin mug!

But it is a poor enough life for the barber. He does little business, save on Sundays and holidays, and then only when the weather is fine. Even on a busy morning he can hardly expect to earn more than a franc, or, at most, two, so that the open-air business is not sufficiently attractive to arouse any competition amongst the members of the craft.

Round about the quais, near the Tuileries, one may see here and there, at the top of a slope leading down to the river, a gaily-painted box chained to the wall, and bearing the inscription:

MARIE		MOREL
Baigneur	OR	Tondeur

or the like, to catch the eye of the passer-by on the promenade. At the bottom of the slope the "*baigneur*" and "*tondeur*" — the dog washer and clipper — may be found plying his trade beside his great tub of yellow wash.

The afternoon is the busy time, when the fond master or mistress of a poodle wishes to have doggy groomed. Doggy's hair has been getting rather long, his face and back want shaving, and the lovely knots on his tail need to be retouched. A chair is provided, from which the owner surveys the operations. The *tondeur's* wife takes doggy in her lap, and holds him securely while the good man clips him skilfully, giving him a beard and moustache, and all those other little touches

which make the French poodle a thing of beauty to some, and a fearful and wonderful monstrosity to others.

After ten minutes' clipping doggy is plunged into a tub of yellow wash to have his coat cleansed, and is then enveloped in a delicious lather of soap. This finished, he is dipped into the river, and rubbed dry with a sponge. Then his master departs proudly with his renovated dog to make room for the next customer, who has been patiently waiting his turn, lying under his master's chair. It is one of the most curious sights of Paris to see a fashionably-dressed Parisian or Parisienne superintending a poodle's toilet on the quai.

In the mornings the horses also are brought for a bath, and ridden down the slope into the stream by bare-legged men, while others are led into the deep water by a man, walking along the narrow stone ledges which are to be found here and there on the side of the quays.

In the summer afternoons the Quai



THE BAIGNEUR.



THE ANGLERS' REACH ON THE SEINE

de la Conférence is the favourite resort of the *pêcheurs à la ligne*. The calm and contemplative craft of Isaak Walton would be thought the last recreation to attract the restless Frenchman, but yet the Anglers' Reach on the Seine is always well patronised. Nobody ever seems to catch anything—except, occasionally, an old shoe—but that does not appear to discourage them. If you watch thirty men for an hour or two you *may*, perhaps, see one land a fish the size of a sprat.

The game is certainly not worth the candle, but the players seem to enjoy it. As they sit smoking in a long row on the parapet by the promenade, looking patiently out to the broad expanse of Southern Paris, they are regarded by the feverish passers-by as beings of a wondrous superiority, who can sit for a whole afternoon in one place. The Anglers' Reach is the most restful corner of the Gay City.

There is something curious in the attraction which the angler's art has for the Parisian. It is related that, on the day of the Commune, the 24th of May, 1871, when the people in the streets were being shot down by soldiers, and the Communists were setting fire to the public buildings, one or two *pêcheurs à la ligne* spent the day calmly angling from the Quai by the Pont Neuf!

A short walk to the East and we cross the Pont des Arts to the Quai Conti, facing the "Institut de France." The Institut stands on the site of the old Tour de Nesle, renowned for the exploits of the immoral queen, Jeanne de Bourgogne, who, according to the popular legend, used to entice handsome youths into the tower, and save herself from discovery by having them thrown out from a window into the Seine before daybreak. It is also noteworthy that, at this spot, in bygone times, a chain was stretched across to block the passage of the river to an enemy.

We are now on the Quai Conti—a veritable bookman's paradise. For a quarter of a mile the parapet of the quai is covered with a row of little boxes. At night these are fastened down by long iron rods, but in the morning the *bouquinistes*—as the dealers are called—arrive on the scene to arrange their wares, and the second-hand book-market is soon in full swing. The dealers, men and women, take up their position on chairs, at the end, where they can keep an eye on the thirty or forty feet length of boxes which they each own, but everybody is welcome to go through the library at his leisure.

Students going to the "Institut," *ouvriers* going to their work, rich

and poor alike come here for books, and the Quai Conti is the recognised market of Paris for second-hand books and music. Here are theological treatises which a priest on his morning round stops to turn over, novels without number, files of comic papers, works on medicine, astronomy, law, all indiscriminately associated, and rubbing shoulders with worn books that, one may well imagine from their bindings, have once held honourable place in the library of some noble family now fallen on evil days. What histories of family misfortune are written in these scattered libraries.

turning over the books. M. de Freycinet and Alphonse Daudet have, many a time, spent a morning there, and the ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Hanotaux, is at the present time, a frequent visitor. A reminiscence of one of the leading English journalists of Paris, published at the time of Mr. Gladstone's death, reminds us that the Grand Old Man was also one of the lovers of this spot.

"I remember meeting Mr. Gladstone," he writes: "one bright summer morning on the Quai Voltaire, where he was buying books. He then expressed his admiration of Paris, and said, 'I feel



THE BOOK MARKET

Many a treasure has been found here by the careful searcher, books with personal dedications in the handwriting of Victor Hugo and other celebrities, and rare editions of valuable works. A French gentleman of the writer's acquaintance, who loved to *bouquiner*—as the French call it—once bought here, for a few sous, an ancient Bible which was afterwards sold for six hundred francs.

Many a noted figure has wandered up and down the stalls and shops fronting the Quai Conti and the Quai Voltaire

the warm breath of Albert le Grand, and recall memories of the Sorbonne as I reverently handle some of their volumes. This is the real Paris.' The book-vendors knew him well."

To the stranger with an hour to spare there are few spots more fascinating than this quiet rendezvous, with its curious company of book-lovers. It is France in miniature.

But alas! Like the *blanchisseuses*, so long accustomed to wash the linen of their customers in the open wash-house along the banks of the river, the gentle

*bouquiniste* is being driven from the spot with which he has been associated from time immemorial, to make way for the new railway from the Gare d'Orléans to the Quai Malaquais.

Never again will he take up his quarters on the parapet of the Quai Conti, and nothing will reconcile him to the change to the other side of the river. The business is decaying, and perhaps the next years will see its extinction on the quais. The large dealers have been such persistent buyers that it is now almost impossible to secure any real bargains at the open stalls. But for some time, at any rate, the *bouquiniste* will remain one of the ornaments of his beloved Paris, and will still continue to be one of the most interesting of the many personalities that frequent the banks of the Seine.

Until nearly the end of the last century the Parisians had no opportunity of enjoying the extended river views which can now be obtained from the bridges and quais. For the bridges were covered with houses from side to side, and the only views to be obtained consisted of a succession of squares of water shut in by the high houses, from bridge to bridge. A series of disasters occurred before the demolition of these houses was ordered by Louis XVI.

In the year 1498 some carpenters reported that the piles supporting the Pont Notre Dame were so decayed as to imperil the stability of the bridge, but the warning was unheeded until towards the end of the following year, when another carpenter made such an alarming report to the authorities that the bridge was instantly closed to traffic and notice given to the householders to remove their goods.

While they were thus occupied, on the 25th October, 1499, without warning, the bridge suddenly collapsed, and the ruins were hidden in the enormous cloud of dust that filled the air.

Many marvellous escapes are recorded

by the chronicler of the time. One man in a house seeing a chasm suddenly open beneath him jumped into the water and swam ashore in safety, while an infant was thrown into the river in its cradle and floated away, to be picked up later quite unhurt.

In 1718 a curious accident happened to a neighbouring bridge, the Petit Pont. In April of that year a woman lost her son by drowning, and was much distressed because his body could not be found. Thereupon a neighbour advised her of an excellent plan. She took a lighted candle and a loaf of blessed bread, set them adrift on a wooden tray and sped them with a prayer to Saint Nicholas.

Her offering floated down to a barge of hay and set fire to it. The men in the boats around cut it adrift to save their own craft, and the blazing barge floated down to the Petit Pont and lodged against the scaffolding in which the bridge was encased. This readily took fire, and the flames spreading to the houses on the bridge, all were destroyed.

The demolition of the bridge-houses has put an end to all such accidents, and the victims of the Seine in these days are of another kind. The melancholy little house on the bank of the Island of the City exhibits to the curious crowd the river's weekly tribute. The victims of the Bourse, the disappointed actors in some love tragedy—or perhaps some despairing victim of the "*vol au cautionnement*"—these look out sadly from the windows of the Morgue, immortalised by Browning:—

First came the silent gazers ; next

A screen of glass, we're thankful for ;

Last, the sight's self, the sermon's text,

The three men who did most abhor

Their life in Paris yesterday,

So killed themselves : and now, enthroned

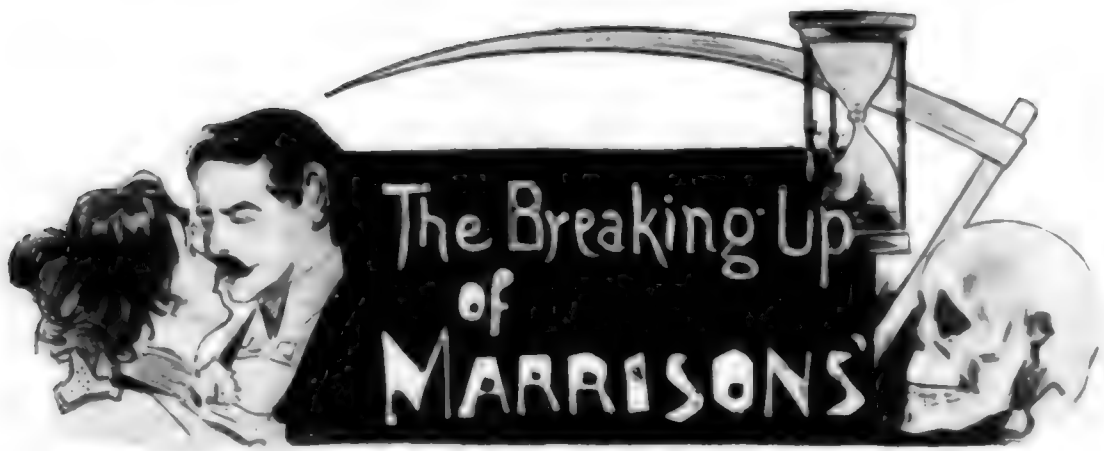
Each on his copper couch, they lay

Fronting me, waiting to be owned.

I thought, and think, their sin's atoned.







WRITTEN BY E. VARRIN

ILLUSTRATED BY HUTTON MITCHELL

**I**T was, perhaps, some recollection of their ovation of the night before that nerved the arm and spurred the energies of the little fire brigade of Sunningwolde now. But a short twenty-four hours earlier they had marched proudly through the steep, crowded streets in procession, as the insidious confetti lingering in tunic and trappings still bears witness—admired of all beholders, with a ringing accompaniment of cheers lining the route, they swung along, heads well back, and with military precision of step, and each man's unspoken thought was that this—*this* was the feature of the carnival, and the mummerly before and behind a mere pandering to popular superstition and favour.

They worked hard enough now—not staying even to wipe the sweat from their honest faces; worked even when hope had turned to uncertainty, and this again to conviction, and the conviction one of defeat.

For "Marrison's" Private Hotel and Boarding Establishment is doomed; and Mrs. Marrison, sitting in the centre of the front lawn, lifts up her voice and weeps—a pale, despairing Dido amid the ruin of her hopes. All around her the wreckage lies strewn—disputed

and wrangled over in four different languages; for the fair dwelling so rapidly approaching destruction had been in connection with Cook's, and the month is August.

Now the verandah has caught; how the flames leap up!—licking the face of the building to the very roof. Another groan bursts from the widow's lips. How neatly have the allurements of this same covered promenade been placed before the notice of the public! Sixty feet long! and in less than that number of minutes to be—what?

Some of the boarders—but these are of the younger, impressionable kind—groan too: an easy, comfortable sort of groan (for is not their luggage quite safe?) tinged with a sentimental regret. "Sixty feet long?—really! It seemed longer, did it not, when you and I . . . sauntered up and down, after dinner? And there . . . quite at the darkest, farthest end . . . do you remember?"

Mrs. Marrison's distracted gaze wanders over the face of the house. The lower windows all belch forth flame and smoke—no pleasant sight, so she looks higher.

A white curtain fluttering from a top window attracts her attention.

*Why, what is that at the back of the signalling rag?*

The good woman rubs her swollen eyelids energetically with her damp pocket-handkerchief, and looks again.

"Oh!" she screams in high falsetto, "Look! look!"

But others have seen, too, and almost a hush has come to the jabbering, gesticulating crew. A masculine voice takes advantage of the pause to ask

nervous English with a reiteration that verges on monotony.

Then a little Dutch woman claps her hands sharply, and calls aloud. She has been a favourite—has this good-humoured little woman. It seems strange to see tears in her eyes, and rolling down her suddenly whitened cheeks.



"ALL AROUND HER THE WRECKAGE LIES STREWN"

querulously for a Gladstone bag with 'E. M.' on it; and two women wrangle excitedly in the background over the identity of a shoe. One of the disputants proves her right to the article in question by putting it on and walking away in it; but the bagless man continues to demand his property in good,

"God help her!" says an elderly man, and in different tongues others take up the cry instinctively, for of human aid it is plain there is now no hope.

Presently the man in quest of his bag looks up.

A little Frenchman with high bald

forehead and waxed mustachios stands near, wrapped in a travelling rug. He is weeping copiously, and calling at intervals on his God. Suddenly to his excited fancy a whirlwind swoops down on him, twirls him round with great velocity, and departs again swiftly, bearing his cherished rug in its clutches.

Then a groan that is almost a shriek goes up from the crowd on the lawn, and a confused, exclamatory murmur:

"He's mad!—mad!" "The idiot—the fool!" "The brave man!" "It's suicide!" "God!—what a hero!"

Now by twos and threes people huddle quickly off—it is not a pleasant sight to watch one's fellow-creatures roasted to death. One here and there has to be carried: some decorously in limp unconsciousness; others in the plunging paroxysms of violent hysteria. In a couple of minutes a risky, but, in its novelty, pleasurable, excitement has been turned to grimmest tragedy. Though the man now fighting his way up that fiery staircase has been an almost unnoticed item in the lengthy list of visitors, and not two can boast of having exchanged half-a-dozen words with him, they all know instinctively that he will not turn back.

And they are right. But before he has gone a dozen steps he asks himself with a sort of blank surprise: why has he done this? He has no answer ready. What good can he do? None! And then again: why has he flung his life away? Was he tired of it? Are any of us tired of our lives when it comes to the pinch? It was as sweet to him as to most men. Who is this he is now struggling to reach?—a woman. Is she young? He does not know; it is probably one of the servants—fat and ugly. Under the cover of the rug he smiles grimly; no thought of turning back enters his brain. That he has acted on unreasoning impulse is plain enough now, but being an Englishman, he will stick to it and carry it through to the end—even though the end be—

No! it will not be that!—thank God he has the means of averting *that*! He feels hurriedly: yes, it is there. Habits contracted with foreign travel are not always dropped in the mother country.

The stairs creak and sway frightfully; the banisters are well alight. The friendly rug, too, is burning bravely. A thought of its owner's dismayed countenance comes to him, and he laughs aloud.

Now the topmost flight is reached; he flings the useless covering far behind him and gropes his way across the landing.

The air is thick—solid almost—with choking smoke; he can hardly see. Ah! this must be the door. He turns the handle hurriedly: it is locked. He batters angrily: does the fool think she is locking herself into safety?

A voice reaches his ear:

"The key is broken in the lock; I cannot open the door."

He kicks the lower panel in, and putting one leg through the aperture to obtain leverage, bursts the upper half to splinters. The top doors in a house are always thin: they decrease in stoutness with every ascending flight, and this one, too, is old, and the man is angry.

"Why, in Heaven's name, did you lock the door?"

"I do not know; it is habit, I suppose."

"Here: come out!" hurriedly, "let's try the back."

She creeps through the splintered frame easily, and catches at his hand.

"Oh, I thought I was alone—alone!" with a sob, "to die like a rat in a trap . . . Is it too late?"

"Come!" he returns. Hand in hand they run along the narrow passage. At the head of the stairway he leaves her and hurries down a few steps.

A glance is sufficient; he returns slowly, looking up at her as he comes. Heaven! it is a slender slip of a girl with long black hair and frightened eyes. He feels angrier than ever.

"Who are you?" he asks savagely.

"I am a visitor."

"What are you doing there?" with a nod along the passage.

"The house was full; and I didn't mind. I am poor."

"Where does this lead?"

"To the children's playroom."

There are two doors on the way; each one he carefully closes and bolts behind them as they pass. A candle

still burns in the deserted room. Mrs. Marrison has been justly proud of this item on her tariff: "Children's Recreation Rooms" sounds well, and bears out the surface promise of "Home Comforts" placed prominently on the list, lower down. Though the room is bare and ugly it seems like a haven of peace to the two visitors, for it is empty of smoke and noise; all that is unpleasant is left at the back of those bolted doors, and that these may have closed for good for them is a thought that brings a sensation of rest rather than one of terror.

A rocking-horse balancing on three rickety, paintless legs stares glassily at them as they enter.

"I thought I was alone," she says again breathlessly.

He looks at her keenly: it is evident she knows nothing of his desperate fight up to reach her. The thought is a little galling, but because it is so he instantly resolves that she should remain ignorant. All things considered, he is glad that she is not what his fancy had portrayed. A sudden spasm of laughter catches at his throat at the thought, and shakes him. He turns hastily, but it is too late.

"You are amused?" a little curiously.

"Yes, I am amused."

"And I,—I am frightened."

With clasped hands she moves to the window and stands looking down. The back of the house is flat and bare; not a projection of any kind breaks the severe monotony of surface. This side faces the heights that tower precipitously far up towards the star-lit sky. Not a building is in sight; the evening is calm and beautiful. The fire rages more in the front: even as she stands she can feel the jarring crash of falling masses. Ah! that surely was the staircase: "how long now!—how long!"

She has unwittingly spoken her thought aloud, and the man crosses over to her side.

"There is no hope?" looking up at him.

"There is no hope"—gravely, "it will not be long."

"Ah!—it is selfish, but I am glad I am not alone," she says again.

He draws a chair to her side and motions her to sit down. There are other candles in the room; he lights them all, and then sits down near her. He looks earnestly at the little shrinking figure with the face now hidden in outspread hands.

"Can you talk?" he asks.

The hands drop down to her sides.

"Yes," simply.

"Will you tell me your name?—are you alone here?"

"My name is Anice Bartlett; I am alone here; I have no near relations in the world."

"Have you been here long? I have not noticed you before."

"I came to-day. I am—not strong. They—the doctors—recommended Sunningwolde: it is good for people who have a weak—who are not strong. And you——?" timidly.

"My name is Mallory—Ernest Mallory. I was crossing to-morrow. I am on the staff of a newspaper."

"And are you alone too?"

"I have a mother and sister—at home."

There is a pause; again the hands move up to her face.

"Don't!" he says, involuntarily, "I beg your pardon; but if you could talk it would be better."

"I will try. I, too, work for a living. I am a teacher—in a school: this is my holiday."

Something in the incongruity of this statement again tickles his fancy: he throws his head back to laugh—to check himself almost in the act.

"Yes?" quickly.

"That is all; there is nothing else to say."

How blackly the eyes look out from the pallor of the thin little face. What a slip of a girl she is! Suddenly with crushing force a conviction of the fate that awaits her takes hold of him.

Again he becomes filled with anger: blind, sullen anger and rebellion against circumstance. Why should it be so?—the blatant, senseless cruelty of it! Instinctively he has been trying to push thought off, because it is unpleasant, but it comes back now and overwhelms him with a knowledge of his utter impotence. Is there not *anything* to



be done?—surely, *surely* there is a way!

He half rises: the savage, resentful feeling makes him restless. Why is he sitting here like a log whilst life—pulsing, lusty, life—flows through his veins? For the moment he feels strong enough to accomplish anything—strong with the desperate fighting instinct that comes to cornered man and beast alike. . . . then . . . then he is conscious that the girl is watching him anxiously, and with a sigh he sinks back again.

"You are a brave woman," he says involuntarily.

"Oh no!—I am not—I am not!"

She rises hurriedly from her chair and paces backwards and forwards down the short length of the room.

"I am a coward—a coward! If you had seen me there," with a look back towards the way they had come, "you would not have said that."

He gets up and walks with her.

"If you could tell me; I might be able to help—a little. There is a certain relief in telling another our thoughts sometimes. Is it—that you fear—death?"

He has tried to think of another way of wording his question—the very sound of the word is ugly—but has failed.

"I *do* fear it—unspeakably; but it is not that. It is worse—worse—much worse! I have lost belief in—in—Oh, tell me! I—I am afraid, and now—There is . . . a beyond?"

He takes the hand nearest to him and holds it firmly, and, for a time, they walk to and fro in silence.

"Tell me: you have never doubted before?" he asks presently.

"Never."

"No: why should you? doubt and unbelief only come to us when we are least mentally and physically fit to grapple with them; they're ugly visitors, but they are cowards too: show a bold front and they will fall back. Try to shake it off, dear!—it will pass! If you feel you have lost something that no longer is anything but a name, why are you distressed and anxious? Cannot you see?—in all your short, uneventful life this is the first strain: are you to part with your simple, earnest beliefs just when they are of most help to you?

With a fuller knowledge of their helplessness comes also the temptation: which is to be the stronger? Have you ever heard S——?"

"Yes."

"Has one the *right* to hear him and disbelieve?"

"After all, what is asked of us?—a little faith. A little time we are granted in which to be faithful—and then—Knowledge!"

Being a man, and not to the office born, he speaks at first awkwardly and with restraint. There is the hesitation, too, of baring his thoughts on this subject for another's guidance—that they are sufficient for us is not enough: when another turns to us, the old threshed-out question, too, comes back—the question of Right and Wrong. He is not a religious man—who would laugh more heartily than he at the idea?—yet at times in his busy, careless life, he has thought deeply over the vexed problem of our Christian faith. At an early period he recognised limitations and pushed thought no further—anything beyond represented disquiet, mental conflict, possible Unbelief, so he shrank back, content to leave matters as they were: a coward's policy he told himself cynically, but one, too, that afforded comparative ease and comfort, and so made the choice characteristic of the man. Then, again, a mocking, teasing thought of the ridiculous side of his spiritual mentorship is with him: how would his position strike a third person—any one of his brothers of the pen?—Dalzell, of the "*Piccadilly Observer*," for instance? He winces at the idea.

Nevertheless he talks on, and presently all sense of a falsity of position dies away; he remembers only that this timid wavering soul has asked his help, and he must give it.

A quieter look comes to the girl's face, and she draws her hands away gently.

"I am glad I am not alone," she says for the third time. "You are very kind—and right. You make it quite easy to understand; already it is passing."

She looks at him anxiously; almost as if she sees him for the first time.

"How young you are—and strong!"



"You, too, are young," gently, "but you are not strong."

"No; I was very ill last summer—with rheumatic fever; I shall never be well again——"

She stops abruptly. "I forgot!"

Though the candles burn bravely the room is not so easy to see across now; there is an incessant vibration too, and

him through the gloom; quite near a girl with face shrouded in her long, black hair.

Suddenly she begins to sob, hopelessly, drearily.

He goes to her quickly, and puts his arm around her.

"Be brave!" he whispers. He tries hard to think of something else to



"SUDDENLY SHE BEGINS TO SOB"

the locked doors no longer keep out the noise.

Mallory shuts his eyes: it is all a dream, or, rather, nightmare; it will pass.

He waits a moment, and then opens them. Again the bare, prosaic room studded with dim points of light; a battered, wooden horse plunging towards

say, but somehow the words will not come.

She leans her head against him. "Oh I am a coward—a coward!"

He holds her closer. "You are not—you are not!" strongly.

Again he tries desperately to think of something to say.

"I am very glad we met, Anice."

Though the words are baldly conventional, the accent is not, and she seems to understand.

"I am more than glad." Bending her head she kisses his hand. "I cannot try to thank you."

"Don't do that!" roughly. He moves his arm—only to put it back again, for she sways unsteadily.

The room is now full of smoke: the cracking, grinding reports incessant. For the first time he loses control over his thoughts; a numbing sense of unreality and a consciousness of the girl's shuddering, clinging, presence is all that remains with him. That and an intense, an overpowering, desire to laugh.

The girl stirs and moans, and instantly he gathers himself together again.

"If it were—any way—but this! It is—so cruel!"

He does not speak for a moment.

"If there were another way, would you take it?" hoarsely.

"Any way but this!—any way but this!"

Again he is silent: he *must* have a little time, he argues fiercely with himself—only a little time! He decided instantly—it is not *that*! This is no question of ethics: a moral choice between Right and Wrong never entered his head—no!—only—only it is . . . that for the first time . . . he is afraid . . . horribly afraid!

Personally, too, the sense of sacrifice

is greater than when the result of his impetuous act first came home to him, for he has no second shot; and, as the girl has said, it is hard to die struggling . . . like a rat . . .

He moves his position slightly.

"Anice!" he feels for and draws her arms about his neck; she is very quiet, "say: 'I forgive you!'"

"I—forgive—you."

"And kiss me!—darling."

She kisses him. It is very close now.

"Don't look round! Don't look round!"

At this moment the room rocks violently, and the ceiling parts. The rift runs across from end to end, bits of plaster fall in a shower around them. How hot it is! They are standing up.

Suddenly the girl's arms flag from about his neck, and her light weight shifts.

He catches her hastily as she falls, and stumbles to the nearest light. He bends to peer at her face, hardly able to breathe so great is the revulsion of feeling—of hope—that has come to him.

In a little time he lays her down gently. He takes off his coat, but before covering her face with it, stoops, and kisses her on the lips.

"And some maintain there is no God!" he says aloud.

And then the end being very near, he once more raises his arm.

